

COME DANCE WITH ME
ON DEVIL'S NIGHT



C. DAVID COVENEY B.A.,LL.B.



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Come Dance With Me on Devil's Night
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[Editors note: In converting from Word to WordPerfect some of the coding went wonky and text may not appear as it should. Also the author was a fall down drunk alcoholic who died falling down the basement stairs of his house at the time it burnt down so he was probably trying to escape and in his stupor, opened the wrong door.]

A Synopsis

This is a thriller about the rise and fall of a new twenty first century nation based on the egalitarian society of the Iroquois. It is set in Ontario, Canada but involves past and present actions of the Right wing of the CIA. At the core is a modern White man's conspiracy discovered by the new Iroquois Confederacy that would involve the destruction of lesser breeds such as welfare recipients by the use of germ warfare, much as smallpox infected blankets were once given to the Indians in the nineteenth century to infect them. Now the same sort of thing is being planned on a much larger and more sophisticated scale.

The protagonist, Nurse Analees Cleef, is a psychiatric nurse. Approaching mid - life, she is alone, burned out, and childless. Trapped in a deadly dull down to earth life, she regularly escapes into flights of fantasy. She dreams of being a glamorous spy like Mata Hari, or a sex goddess like Marilyn Monroe. She begins a relationship with a man named Larry Longboat. He is a mysterious man, tall, with a weathered and rugged red face and a long nose that had once been broken.

Analees also befriends two of her teenage patients at her hospital. Terri and Lee are both sexual assault victims. Terri is a tall, blonde, blue - eyed Mohawk who is obsessed with her Iroquois ancestry. She has predicted that she will die on her next birthday, which falls on October 30 - Devil's Night. Her friend Lee is a short Anglo Saxon karate expert. While ceremonially becoming blood sisters, the girls are falsely accused of attempting suicide, and are separated and punished.

With the help of Larry Longboat, the two teenagers escape from the hospital and are taken to a new Iroquois village hidden in Northern Ontario. By trickery, Analees is herself taken captive by the new nation. She goes north with Larry, and he seduces her. Then she is date drugged and kidnapped. Roughly treated at first, she grows to adopt a new identity and a new way of life.

She joins a new culture based on caring and sharing. The Leader of this society is a Visionary who believes himself to be the reincarnation of the Seneca Prophet Handsome Lake, a man who recovered from near death due to alcohol and began to preach among the Iroquois around 1800. The New Handsome Lake has also recovered from an alcoholic pit, and has had visions that have led to the birth of "the New North American Nation". His vision is a new, improved version of the older teachings of Handsome Lake. People from all over the world are to become part of this new nation, reflecting the fact that the Iroquois confederacy also adopted strangers. Many, from all over the world, have already taken shelter "in the shade of this new tree."

As part of her initiation, Analees learns martial arts forms gathered from all over the world, including an ancient Indian secret of becoming invisible by crossing over into another dimension. She then helps her new nation with espionage.

First she helps to bug the home of a top civil servant who married one of her friends from nursing school. With the intelligence gathered from the devices planted in this “raid”, the new Indians learn about a conspiracy to wipe out “lesser breeds”. They also learn that much of the work on this project is being done on the site of the hospital where she used to work. Old buildings on the property were once used for secret CIA experiments in the 1950s. They have been boarded up for years. Now, they are being used again, this time to develop germ warfare for used against the poor. (The rich will be given immunity to these germs.)

In a second raid, they manage to destroy this laboratory.

On the third mission, much more malignant in nature, they shoot down an airliner by firing a rocket from a sailboat hid near the notorious smuggling waters near Walpole Island.

Analees also becomes involved with Handsome Lake, and does a Mata Hari type dance for him. He then carries her off to make love. Larry Longboat sees all this “from the shadows” and becomes wildly jealous.

Larry returns to his mission as a recruiter for the new Iroquois nation. Before he leaves, He and Analees embrace, and make love for one last time. They both pray that she will eventually be sent to join him in his lonely work. For now, they both have their duties. She is to help handle health care in the village.

Meanwhile, a group made up of men from the RCMP, the OPP, and the FBI meet to discuss rumors of a survivalist camp in Northern Ontario. Jean Lamaire, the top RCMP man, is sent in to scout the area. It seems they have a secret informant in that camp. Jean is told to take care to “rescue” a certain tall blonde nurse.

Jean is captured by the New Nation. In his wallet he has a picture of his ex - wife. Because she resembles the woman in the photo, Analees gets the job of seducing him in order to get information about who sent him. Like a later day Mata Hari, she dances for him, and more.

Eventually, Jean escapes, taking Analees with him. Trying to recapture him, Terri uses Indian “magic” to become invisible. She is accidentally killed by a shirikin thrown by Lee. It is Devil’s Night.

At Hallowe’en, Analees winds up at a secret government command center funded by the secret Globalist Government set up by the IMF. She pretends to be on Jean’s side. From there, she sees the destruction of her Iroquois village, in a battle reminiscent of the massacre at Waco, Texas, only this time, the victims are much better armed..

Watching the action, which includes the use of nuclear weapons, she freaks out and, grabbing a machine gun, wipes out everyone in the command center. Then she drops the gun and uses her Iroquois training to “just disappear” into the shadows of the forest.

“ As I stand by the open stairway window, I look out. In the sky, wild clouds are

gathering for a storm, like grey witches flying to a sabbat. Suddenly, I realize that I am leaning on the windowsill of Heaven. I dream of things that never were. I ask: 'Why not?'

From : "The New Visions of Handsome Lake"

Chapter One: "Having a Read in the Park"

The man was still watching her. She could feel his eyes gazing at her. Somehow, it seemed to invade her privacy, even here, in a public park.

The woman on the sunlit park bench sat alone. The shoulders on her dark blue blouse were padded. Her white skirt was clean and starched. Prim taupe pantyhose tapered to white leather sandals with straps around her ankles. The strawberry blonde was every bit the proper modern professional. Her thin reading glasses even gave her a slightly scholarly look. She was engrossed in the book that lay open on her lap.

She was reading about another woman, a woman that died over 80 years ago. She wished she could live that woman's life instead of her own. The print seemed to dance off the pages of the book and into her brain :

"The dancer's long, snake-like limbs writhed with sensuality. The music of the Far East rode on the strings of a lone sitar. The woman's graceful body glided smoothly back and forth. Torch-light shone on her bejeweled silver brassiere. Her hand slapped at her slim hip. Her lone remaining slip seemed to float away like a faint purple mist. Her darkly tanned skin glistened."

The woman in the park gulped hard as she read that. She looked at her own pale skin. A cloud drifted in front of the sun. She felt cold. The grass darkened like a frown on nature's face. This woman knew that she would have to show her passion differently - aloof, cold, like an Ice Queen. That was what she was built for, with her stern Nordic look. Now back to her dark-skinned would-be alter-ego:

"Behind the dancer stood a statue of Siva, the Hindu god of love. The many arms of the statue gave it a spider-like appearance. Trailing plants turned the room into a tropical jungle. The smell of incense filled the salon. The dance was called the Ketjoeboeing. It was named after a rare Indonesian flower that was said to bloom and die in but a single night."

The Ice Queen wondered what she would call her exotic dance -if she ever got to do one. She noticed how the park's small brown river flowed slowly on. She sighed. Some lives were like that river. She read some more :

"The dancer that night was Mata Hari, founder of modern striptease. The year was 1914. Famed in life as an entertainer and a courtesan, she would go to her death as a spy. After her death, it was as a spy that she would enter the halls of legend."

Analees Cleef wondered what would become of her, an unknown nurse in a small Canadian town. Like Eleanor Rigby, her name would be buried with her. The Ice Queen shuddered at the thought and returned to her book :

After her dance performance, Mata Hari would appear dressed in the formal evening attire of the period...corseted and bustled and elegant. Now she was introduced as the distinguished Lady McLeod."

The nearest Analées ever got to a corset was squeezing into a one-piece bathing suit. Secretly, she longed to be trussed up in a nice tight corset with all the trimmings. She'd also have a full formal dress that bloomed like a flower, even too small high-heeled booties would be a welcome change. Who needed this modern age, anyway ?

Analees closed the book on its marker. She looked up over her ever-present reading glasses. A Nearby clock tower told her that it was time to go back to her office and review her files. She had to get ready for that damned hearing tomorrow.

As she strode officiously towards the hospital, her eyes caught sight of the strange old

buildings that stood fenced off in the distance, ghostly relics of a by-gone era. They had housed patients in the era of lobotomies and ice - pack hydrotherapy. Later, they had housed work on the secret CIA / LSD experiments of the nineteen fifties, part of Canada's contribution to the effort to create the perfectly programmed warrior. The buildings were still off limits. The government was still using them for something secret.

Chapter Two: "The Hearing"

Eighteen, going on eighty.

She was tall and straight, like corn growing. In fact, she used to think of herself as the corn maiden, partly because of the shock of blonde hair that stood up from the top of her head. It was all so crazy, but then, who ever heard of a blonde Mohawk anyway?

She saw herself reflected in the thick glass door that barred her exit from the ward. She was dressed dramatically in a black T-shirt and black pants, and shiny black platform boots that came up to her knees. The platforms made her look taller than she already was at six foot five.

Yes...she was ready. Anyway, she should be released at the hearing. After all, she wasn't really crazy. If she wanted to cut herself to show her courage, what business was it of theirs?

The female nurse that was to accompany her looked up and smiled reassuringly :
"You'll do fine, Terri, just fine. "

That was head nurse Analees Cleef, the "boss" of the ward. The head nurse really had more say than the doctors did in the everyday life of the patients. Nurse Cleef, with strawberry blonde hair, wore a dark green dress with padded shoulders. She had black nylon hose and shiny black shoes with one inch heels. The dress was two sizes too small. Terri wondered which one of them was trying to make a good impression on the Review Board.

She smiled and laughed at the thought of the nurse squeezing into that dress. No doubt the staff would say that she was hearing voices because she laughed. Well, let them do so.

Nurse Cleef unlocked the door and they left the ward. Terri walked down a long empty hallway, her boot steps echoing. Her nurse, following. As she walked towards the hearing room, she could see other patients around, each lost in their own private world. She knew she was alone, so alone. She supposed that she had always been that way.

Her lawyer greeted her with a smile and a handshake and a report that she was supposed to read over. All her life was summarized in two type-written pages.

Did she disagree with anything? Any comment?

"Yeah. I want outa here."

Her lawyer was short, balding, and sunburned. Terri wished that she could get outside long enough to get a sunburn. She wouldn't waste the time playing golf.

Across the room, she saw her doctor: The woman was an East Indian Punjabi Princess. Why couldn't she go back to her rich relatives in India and leave poor little Canadian Indians alone?

Terri sat down beside her lawyer, away from her doctor.

She looked around. The hearing room was plain enough... just a long table, and several chairs, and windows showing blue sky that lay outside, beckoning. On the wall there were pictures of past administrators, sort of like a hospital hall of fame.

At the far end of the table, a chunky woman made a recording by speaking into a small machine that looked like a gas mask.

The thin bearded chairman sat in the middle of the three-person Board that would hear the case. He looked like a wise Jewish scholar. He also looked like a fighter in the Red Revolution in some movie that she had seen. In reality, he was just a plain old bookseller with political connections.

The chairman introduced the other Board members. One was a tall balding doctor with a red face. The other looked like a frumpy housewife.

The Chair continued, his voice almost kindly in tone:

“ Let me tell how we will proceed today. WE have before us the following documents: the form certifying you. your application for a review of that certification. your doctor’s clinical summary for the Review Board. ”

He made it all sound so cut and dried. Hey, like this was her life they were talking about!

The hearing began with the psychiatrist presenting her case. She spoke with an East Indian accent : “ We are concerned that, if she is released, Terri will be a danger to herself and to others. ”

She went on to cover Terri’s life story to date. Terri thought of how all that could be entertaining if only she hadn’t had to live through it.

Terri had been adopted at birth by a white family with two older sons. Somehow this happened in spite of the fact that she was a blood, a full-blooded Indian.

The older of the two boys had abused Terri sexually between the ages of four and eleven. When she complained about it to a counselor at school, the family became hostile towards her. The boy was convicted of Sexual Assault but got only 30 days in jail for it. There had been no contact with the adoptive parents since then. Terri still resented the light sentence.

At the age of fifteen, she was made a ward of Children’s Aid. That was four years ago.

Since then, the hospital had used all its resources. Still, there had been repeated attempts at suicide. Since she had been hospitalized, the behavior had escalated. Most recently, she had eloped and gone to a nearby mall. In front of a crowd of shoppers, she cut her wrist and just sat there and watched the blood spurt out...

“ It was neat, just like a fountain with red lights in it. ”

Terri could not resist commenting. Everyone looked suitably shocked.

“It did look like a fountain, Honest.” Terri, smiled.

Her lawyer turned to her : “Please -- you’ll get your turn. ”

The doctor continued : “Also, recently, she carved her forearm with the letters DOA and the date ‘ October 30

“That’s Devil’s Night. That’s also my birthday. ”

The Chairman raised an eyebrow, then looked at the doctor:

“ Is it her birthday? ”

“ Uh--yes. It says here in the chart that she was born on October 30.

“Please continue. ”

“She can’t sleep. When she becomes detached from reality and thinks she can see the bad brother - the one who abused her so often - in the room with her. ”

The chair interrupted her: “What about the other sibling?

“ Terri fantasizes that he still loves her, that he’ll come and help her. ”

“ Has there been any contact? “

” The parents won’t allow it. ”

“They are not my parents! ”

One could tell from Terri’s voice that she was getting angry.

“Please.”said her lawyer.

“You’ll get your chance to speak later. “ said the Chairman.

The doctor continued: “When she thinks she sees the bad brother in the bedroom with her, she gets attacks of panic. ”

“Wouldn’t you? ”

Terri was still upset. It was as if a Dentist’s drill had hit a nerve.

“ Please. If you don’t stop interrupting, we may ask you to leave. “The Chairman’s voice was calm: “We can go on with the hearing in your absence if we have to. ”

Then he asked the doctor: “Do you have a diagnosis? ”

“Yes. We feel that Terri suffers from post traumatic stress disorder.

“Man, what a mouthful ! “Terri smiled and added: “Sorry. I’ll try to keep still.”

“She has threatened her family. She has said that she will get a gun and shoot them and then shoot herself because she does not want to go to prison. “

”I’m in prison now. ”

“I warned you...” The Chairman’s voice was tense now.

“I’m sorry. Again. “Terri sat back, subdued for the moment.

The Chairman turned to the red - faced doctor :

“Dr. Wright, do you have any questions? ”

“ Yes. --a few. “He addressed the psychiatrist: “Dr. Singh, has her intelligence been tested? ”

“ She tested as below average when first admitted. She was under stress at that time.”

“I’m still under stress--wouldn’t you be? “

The Board doctor ignored Terri’s comment and continued:

“What about activities on the ward? “

” Her participation in ward activities is limited. It’s as if she feels that nothing in her life is going to change, no matter what she does. ”

“Thank you.”

The chairman turned to the woman : “Mrs. Smythe, do you have any questions?”

“Uh...uh...yes. Are there any hallucinations?”

“WE feel that any hallucinations are transitory. Sometimes she thinks she sees her brother - the bad one - in her bedroom at night. ”

“What about the marks on her hands? ”

“ It says DOA October 30. She believes that by then she will be dead.”

“Does that relate to her suicidal tendencies? “

”It might. ”

“No it doesn’t. Someone is going to kill me then. On my birthday. ”

The doctor ignored her and went on with her testimony :

“That, of course, is six months from now. When we ask her how she knows that she’ll die, she just smiles. Like she’s smiling right now. And nodding. ”

“ Thank you doctor. “

Ms. Smythe looked down at her notebook. Her duty was done. She had asked a few questions.

The Chairman now took his turn: “I have a few questions doctor. Has she ever acted violently towards another person? ”

“ It’s. just her plans to kill her parents and brother that concern us. She has been in hospital, so she hasn’t had the chance. ”

“Anything else? ”

“She once shaved her head. ”

“That’s not so unusual. At least she has hair to shave, unlike some of us. ”

The Chairman laughed at his own joke and rubbed his bald spot.

“Thank you, Dr. Singh. Do you have any other evidence? ”

“ Miss Cleef is here from the ward staff. She knows the patient better than I do.

Miss Cleef? ”

“Yes...”

Analees had been sitting at the back of the room. Now she came up and joined the doctor at the table. As she did so, she said a silent prayer. She hated testifying at these hearings. The patient would often think she had it in for her. After the hearing, the doctor could go home. So could the Review Board and the lawyers. But Analées would still have to deal with the patients. If someone were ordered to be detained, it was Analées Cleef who would have to calm them down. Not the bloody doctors. Just like doctors, to leave the nurses to clean up their mess after them.

“ I am the head nurse of ward P. 1. I see Terri every day.”

The doctor looked at a small notepad in front of her:

“Has the patient made any progress since you have known her? “

” She has made small gains in the year that she has been here. On admission we cleaned up quite a lot of blood. Now she will throw things instead of cutting herself. Still, there have been a couple of occasions where she has had to be put in restraints. Then she becomes aggressive and resists being restrained.”

Terri almost screamed: “He used to tie me up when he did those things to me. ”

Nurse Cleef continued: I have been on duty when she’s been talking to space and calling out to people who are not there. We think he has an imaginary boyfriend. ”

Analees was relieved that they weren’t probing her imagination.

“Thank you, nurse. “The doctor sat back, smugly self- confident.

The Chairman turned to the lawyer: “Cross-examination?”

“Thank you. Nurse, when she talks to people who are not there, what does she look like? Is she smiling? “

“Uh, yes.”

“just like she’s playing a little joke on you? ”

“I can’t really tell. ”

“You have worked on the adolescent unit for a long time? ”

“Ten years.”

“Do you have any children of your own ? ”

“Uh -- no. “ The nurse looked a bit uneasy.

Analees resented that question as an intrusion on her privacy, but she tried not to show it. So what if she didn’t have any children of her own ?

“But in any event you feel that you know teenagers? “

” I suppose so. ”

“A lot of her behavior is not that unusual for a teenager now, is it?”

“Most teenagers don’t carve D.O.A. on their arms. ”

“She does not attack other patients, does she? ”

“She is resistant to treatment, restraint and seclusion. She’s a big strong girl. Staff members have been hurt. She kicked one man so hard he flew right across the room

and hurt his back when he hit the wall. He was off on Workers' Compensation for a month.
”

“I was defending myself ! ”

“Shhhh--you'll get your turn in just a minute.”

Her lawyer turned back to the Board: “Those are all the questions that I have, Mr. Chairman. ”

The Chairman looked at Dr. Wright: “Any questions? ”

“No. ”

“Mrs. Smythe? ”

“I have no questions. ”

“Thank you Miss Cleef. Counsel, are you calling evidence? ”

“I wish to call the Applicant.”

Now, at last, it was Terri's turn. Before, she had felt like a frog being dissected in a laboratory. Now, she could speak. Her voice was filled with emotion: I want to get out of here They're not helping me any...”

“Where will you go if the Review Board allows you to sign yourself out of hospital?

“I want to go to Brantford to be with my boyfriend. ”

The lawyer continued :

“There is a large Six Nations reserve near Brantford. Do you feel strongly about your Indian background? ”

“It's all I've got is my Indian blood. I've been separated from my own people far too much. ”

Analees remembered seeing the books that Terri read. A thought occurred to her. The Nurse whispered something to Dr. Singh who then broke in :

“Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question ? ”

“It's irregular but - well, what question ? ”

“Terri, you read a lot about your people, don't you ? “

”What's wrong with that ? ”

“Wouldn't you rather read about your people than talk to others on your ward . ”

“Who wouldn't? My people are brave and adventurous. They have beautiful legends. The people on the ward have moditon. “

There was an awkward silence, then the lawyer asked:

“How will you support yourself on the street? ”

“Oh, I'll get by. ”

“Where will you live? ”

“I'm going to stay with friends. It's none of your business where I'll live. “

Analees thought to herself : “That's because you're going to live on the street.”

”Do you value your life? ”

“I can't say. ”

“Do you miss your family? ”

“I miss my little brother...”

“Thank you. ”

The Chairman turned to the Board's doctor: “Any questions? ”

“Yes--thank you. Tell me, what do you feel when you cut yourself ? ”

“I just feel relief. That's all. ”

Terri was silent for a few seconds, then continued :

“Also, I like the sight of blood. Nice bright red blood ! ”

“I notice that you’re smiling when you say that. ”

“Life itself is a joke. ”

“Do you want to die? ”

“Look--it’s not right to become an adult. I don’t think it’s fair. My friends didn’t live to grow old.”

“Your friends? ”

Analees remembered all too well. She had come back from a short holiday to find out about the tragedy.

“Four of them ran away from here and stole a car... then they had a crash and everyone died.”

Dr. Wright turned to the psychiatrist and asked her : “Is that right ? ”

Dr. Singh answered : “Yes. The accident came as quite a shock to Terri. “

In the solitude of her own mind, Analees thought :

“It came as quite a shock to everyone else on the ward, too. Only us nurse’s aren’t supposed to feel or show feeling or whatever. I cried, too. In the privacy of my office. “

The Board Psychiatrist then turned back to the patient: “That must have been hard to take.”

“That’s life.”

“Are those the only friends that died? ”

“There was Jimmy, too. He O.D.’d. WOW ! He made it over. ”

The nurse muttered under her breath: “Quite an accomplishment. ”

Dr. Wright continued: “Do these friends still talk to you ? ”

Analees remembered how everyone on staff had hoped that fellow would make it. He seemed to be doing so well. Then he absconded and got back into drugs.

Terri was continuing : “Yes, they come and visit me. That’s more than my family does. ”

“What would happen if you cut yourself again? ”

“I’d just sit there and watch it...the blood, I mean., like it’s really neat. Why don’t you try it?”

“Did you go to a mall to cut yourself recently? ”

“No. I went to the mall to get an ice cream cone. Then I cut myself. You know, it was really neat seeing all those people watching me like I was a movie star or something, like they had never seen blood before. This one lady hid her little boy’s face so he couldn’t see. ”

“Were you angry with those people? ”

“Depression is just anger turned inward. You just heard all about me. Don’t I have the right to be angry? ”

“Thank you. ”

“Depression is just anger turned inward ? Well, at least Terri remembered something from the talks they had had. “thought Analees.

The Chairman turned to the lay member of the Board:

“Any questions? ”

“No questions, thank you.”

“Well, I have a few questions. “

The Chairman looked Terri in the eyes, his face wearing a mask of kindness:

“Why do you want to leave here so badly? ”

“Why does the wind blow free ? “She smiled again : “So I can be with my friends. So I can join my boyfriend Red Cloud. So I can see my little brother again. ”

“Tell us about Red Cloud.”

“The night he was born there was a red cloud wandering amongst the stars. It was a strong omen, so they called him Red Cloud. ”

“Anything else? ”

“No. ”

“I see. Now, what if this Board confirms the certificate and you have to stay in hospital?”

“I’d be pissed off. I have things to do and people to see and I don’t have a lot of time left. ”

“Thank you...”

“Doctor Singh, you have a question? ”

“Yes--Terri, tell us about this boyfriend. What does he look like? ”

“Red Cloud is tall and straight like the oak tree in the forest. He’s my buddy. ”

“Is he here in this hospital with you? ”

“He’s NOT a patient. He came to me after my friends died, they came, to me. They introduced me to him. ”

“If you left here. where would you find him? ”

“On the reserve, maybe. He’ll find me. “

Analees was sitting right behind the doctor now. Suddenly, she remembered something she had read in one of Terri’s books. She leaned forward and whispered something.. then the doctor asked:

“Tell us again why they call him Red Cloud? ”

“Because when he was born, the starry sky glowed red at night. It was like there was a red cloud drifting among the stars.”

“Terri, wasn’t there a great chief named Red Cloud ? ”

“Yes. Red Cloud was war chief of our brothers the Ojibway. He led them in great wars with the Sioux. They still sing of him in the forest. Uh it is the same name... my boyfriend, that is...

“I see. Tell me, Terri, what would happen if you succeeded in killing yourself? ”

Terri smiled yet again, that same strange, almost wistful smile: “I’ll be back. Nothing lasts forever. Not even death itself. ”

Chapter Three : “Lee ”

“Damn. Another new admission at this time of day ? “

Eight hours into a twelve hour shift, Analees was getting tired.

“They’re not supposed to take admissions this late. Damn that new duty doctor, doesn’t she know the unwritten rules ? Maybe some kind of emergency...Just what I need after that damn hearing. ”

It had taken an hour to calm Terri down after her hearing, and, when she was told that her certificate had been upheld, meaning that she would have to stay in hospital, she looked like she was going to explode again. Maybe they should send her to the violent wards of Penatang.

Analees sat back and looked at her office. This ward was her own little empire and her office was the throne room. It was also a little messy. She'd have to clean it up when she got time.

She glanced at her desk. She had photographs on her desk, just like doctors and lawyers do. Her family. Only she had no children to be in the pictures. The faces of her dead parents stared at her. Sometimes she felt like a forty - five year old orphan.

Her cold, aloof father looked at her with distant gray eyes, eyes filled with silent terror. He had been a military man who became a High School teacher. The picture had been taken at his school shortly before he was forced to retire "for health reasons". A schizoid type, it probably took him more courage to teach a class than it did to fight a war. He had hid in books to escape his dreary life.

The picture of her mother, dressed in a stylish fifties skirt and sweater, was taken in younger, happier days. So many women blossom young and fade early! She had once been a writer, spinning webs of fantasy, sharing her dreams with others.

Somehow, along the way, her parents had managed to put her through nursing school. She had originally tried to get into medical school, but her marks in organic chemistry were not high enough. So she settled for nursing school, the next best thing. She chose psychiatric nursing. It was usually a whole lot cleaner than other nursing jobs. After all, it was only until she landed a rich husband...

She sighed heavily. Twenty years later, that still had not happened. Maybe it just wasn't going to happen. She glanced down at her work clothes she'd changed into right after the hearing. White turtle neck, and a trim black mid length skirt. Black leather boots, shiny and business - like. She still had a half decent figure. At least that strange man in the park seemed to think so. Her heart beat just a little bit faster.

Things had changed so much since she had stated here. Once, staff wore uniforms. The men had black slacks and light blue shirts with black clip - on bow ties that would tear - away easily if a patient grabbed them. The women all had dresses, white for the nurses and blue for their assistants. Now, they all wore civilian clothes. Just like the patients.

Her eyes rolled over to the file sent from Admissions.

"Let's see now, is this one crazier than I am ? You can't tell by the clothing anymore. "Lying on her bed, Terri couldn't sleep. She lay awake. She thought of how she should have refused to go back to the ward with her nurse. She had started to do so, but then she had backed down and went with the staff. She couldn't figure out just why she went with them, she just did, that's all. They must have psyched her out. Now, she lay alone in the darkness.

WHAT WAS THAT ?

She felt uneasy, like when her bad brother had come to her at night. She got up and wandered into the hall. At one end of the hall, a red Exit sign glowed like blood. She went back to her room and got her dressing gown on. It was a long white ghostly robe that caressed her calves as she walked. She stepped into her moccasin slippers.

Terri was dying for a cigarette. She thought of how her people had used tobacco in their religion long ago. So long ago. But not so far away. This had been Indian land. Now it was a prison-like hospital. She walked drowsily into the patients' common room. It was deserted when she entered.

At the other end of the room, she saw staff bringing a new patient in -- a girl. She looked like an interesting girl. Maybe they would become friends. Maybe.

She was small -- about 5' 2". Pale skin. Blonde. She wore a purple T-shirt, pale blue jeans, and running shoes.

The staff led her to Nurse Cleef's office. The door closed, and Terri could no longer see them.

Inside the office, Analees glanced at the file on the new patient.

"Hmm. Let's see now. Admission Notes: Height, five foot two. Weight: one hundred and twenty pounds. Sex: female. CAUTION: patient has a black belt in karate. "

Analees had felt proud when a long time ago when she had got her brown belt, with some difficulty. After that, she had sort of cruised a bit, not trying too hard to advance. The boxercise class at her Fitness Club was more fun. And they didn't have rankings to put her down. She sort of suspected that the staff at the dojo had taken pity on her because she tried so hard. And this young kid...had a higher ranking belt.

"Well, well, my little lady, you won't be so tough when I stick a needle full of C.P.Z. in your skinny young but. "

Somehow, Analees felt defensive, and she had not even met the girl. Just some sort of instinct.

She brushed back such thoughts as one would a stray stand of hair that fell across her forehead.

"No. I must not think like that. Such thoughts do me no good. "

Rational Self - counseling. How often it saved the day ! All the rest of the world could go crazy, but Analees Cleef would keep her sanity.

She tried to thaw the ice that already existed in her mind, something the Ice Queen wasn't very good at doing.

A knock on the office door announced the arrival of the escort with her new patient. The Nurse got up, went over, and opened the door.

She stood up straight so as to tower over the new admission. At five foot nine, she towered over most women. Except for young Terri.

"I am your nurse, Miss Webber. My name is Miss Cleef. Please come in. I just want to confirm a few details with you from the charts they sent with you..."

"Do I have any choice?

"We can talk later. "

"Let's get it over with. "

The office was cluttered, sort of lived in. A notice board announced the times for staff aerobics classes along with the patients' meds. There was an old card sent by someone who had moved away.

The nurse sat at her desk and gestured to the new patient.

"Please be seated..."

The girl quickly sat, with a pouting motion. She looked away from the nurse, fixing her eyes on a corner of the room.

The nurse opened a file that was lying on the desk in front of her, but didn't look at it.

"I understand that you have had a hard life. "

"How can you understand it? I'm the one that lived it. "

"I get your point. "

Nurse Cleef looked at the clinical summary before her. "I understand that you were adopted. "

"Yeah. Lucky me. "

"Want to talk about it?

"Nope. "

"The family that adopted you had a son of their own? "

“Bastard. ”

“He took advantage of you. ”

“He was eighteen -- I was eight. Yeah -- he was in trouble a lot. But every time he was out of the psyche hospital, he was into me. He was big and I was little, inside, I mean. I’m still little inside....”

“Then at the age of twelve, you were raped? “

”Yeah. It was at a church corn roast. I can still smell the corn. But everybody felt sorry for the poor preacher that did it. It was almost like he was the victim. When I close my eyes, I can still see the corn growing around where we lay... tall stalks of corn blowing in the wind. Like. I prayed to the corn to help me.”

She laughed nervously, then continued: “Well maybe someday, the corn will help me. There have been stranger goddesses. ”

“You must hate men after that. “

”Not all men. I like the police. They helped me after the rape. They’re the good guys.”

“It says here that you have been in seven different hospitals. ”

“Eight. And one was three times. ”

“That’s a lot of admissions. ”

“They keep kicking me out. ”

“Do you know why they’ve discharged you? ”

“Because they think I’m better ? But how can I be better if I have no place to go to? ”

“There are half-way houses. ”

“That’s just cheaper accommodation. ”

“Do you always go to the police when you are troubled? ”

“They are my only friends. My ‘parents’ that adopted me threw me out just like my blood parents did. I had blood parents, didn’t I ? I must have. ”

“Do the police help you? ”

“Sure. They are my friends. ”

“Then why do you always slash your wrists when you’re at the police station? “So they’ll help me. They’ll get me back into a hospital. ”

“Don’t you want to go back into the community? ”

“What’s out there for me ? I’m safe in hospital. ”

There was a brief silence.

“May I go now, Miss Cleef ? ”

“The other staff will show you to your room. ”

With that, Lee left and slammed the door behind her.

“Typical teenager. “sighed Analees.

She glanced at the small square watch she wore on her right wrist. She was left - handed, but still wore her watch the way right - handed people do so as to disguise the fact. If she ever had to fight for her life, she could surprise an attacker by being a switch - hitter. She could start with a right - handed boxing stance and then switch to lefty. She smiled at the thought. That would be a neat trick. But in twenty years of working in a psychiatric hospital, she had never had to use her martial arts training. Not even once.

Still, lots of good people were left handed. Marilyn Monroe was. Joe Dimaggio’s baseball friends all called her “lefty”. He was her best husband. Kind. Thoughtful. And that big nose of his made you wonder if it’s true what they say about men with big noses.

So this girl Lee was a martial arts freak, eh ? Analees thought that maybe she should

review some of her old karate forms. She did have them on video tape. She used to practice while watching the tapes.

She rose slowly from her desk. Her back was stiff with tension. She stretched like a sleepy cat waking up. Time for a coffee break.

She glanced at her calendar. Yes, time. How time flies. She wasn't so young anymore. Maybe she could no longer be quite so choosy? Nice calendar. Photos of women bodybuilders. Once, she'd almost taken up bodybuilding herself. But she could never get her weight down enough to get really ripped. She smiled again. She was still a strong woman.

"Better be careful." She told herself. Smiling at your own inner jokes is a 'psyche patient' kind of thing to do. People are likely to think that it's a symptom of something. " She grabbed the book that she'd been reading, and stepped over to the door.

She glanced at the pretty blonde actress on the red and pink cover of her pocketbook. That woman had been married many times.

"Some day you'll meet the right man." She told herself. "But then, you've been telling yourself that for years."

She sighed, heavily.

"Well, I need a walk, anyway."

She stepped from her office and out onto the ward.

Terri, the big blonde Indian, was restlessly pacing at the far end of the common room. The Psychiatric Review Board had upheld her certificate. That meant that she had to stay in hospital against her will. She had been badly shaken by the news. And so the staff were watching her for an escape attempt. The new girl was watching her, too. Lee sat in silence on a chair across the room, just staring with expectation, as if hoping to see some entertainment if the girl exploded violently. The other patients were ignoring her, watching the TV set.

As she walked by them, Analees thought of how couch potatoes are pretty much the same everywhere, whether in hospitals or at home.

"Well, let's shut those thoughts off for a few minutes." thought Analees.

"That's why we have coffee breaks."

She reached into her pocket and took out her key. There was a whistle attached in case she had to call for help. She had never had to use it. The ward door opened with a loud CLICK. She opened the door and stepped through it.

She saw him just outside the ward door. It was the man from the park. He was wearing green overalls. He was sweeping the floor. He turned around. His stormy gray eyes caught hers for a moment.

She walked towards the door, passing him. As she did, he spoke to her.

"Hello, my friend. I was just transferred from the North end. Looks like we'll be seeing a lot more of each other."

"Uh, yes. I guess we will." said Analees, not knowing what else to say.

She walked away briskly, putting her key to the ward in her pocket. "Well, I still have my keys."

She began to walk down a long empty hallway, heading for the staff cafeteria. She heard her footsteps echo as she walked along. She looked out of the windows at a golden red sunset sky. Dark gray clouds reminded her of legends of Valhalla. She had read somewhere that the Norse Religion had been similar in some ways to that of the Iroquois. Maybe the Iroquois really were the descendants of early Viking sailors. Just as much as her Dutch forebears were. Interesting theory.

What a sky! One could almost imagine Valkyries flying in that sky.

“Now, old girl, you missed your calling. You should have been a Valkyrie. Maybe if you’re a good girl, you’ll be reborn as one. ”

She turned away from the windows to enter the cafeteria. Her mind drifted. Once upon a time, many years ago, this building had been a new, fresh, state of the art hospital. And she had been a new, fresh, state of the art nurse. With kindness and understanding, she would change people’s lives. Now, she was as old and tired as the buildings around her.

Her trapezius muscles tensed, as they did so often anymore. She felt like a crazy clock that was over - wound.

Familiar slogans went through her mind: “Turn it over. Let it be. Let it be. Stay in the Now. ”

“Coming to the Now ! Sounds like a slogan out of Charlie Manson’s Hymn book. Like when you look death in the face, you come to the now. She remembered the movie ‘ Helter Skelter ’. She had almost envied those kids their sense of belonging to something. But that was all so long ago. Long, long ago, long gone along with Hippies and Haight Ashbury and youth itself. How many more Charlie Mansons would there be ?

She got herself a coffee, black with sugar, and sat down. What did they say about Arabic coffee ? As sweet as sin, and as black as hell ?

She took a sip. It tasted good. She could do with a nice sugar high right now. She opened her book. This book was about Marilyn Monroe.

She remembered the movie, “River of No Return”. The critics all panned it. But she liked it. A lot. She could fancy herself as Marilyn, getting rubbed dry by Robert Mitchum.

An old song went through her mind:

“There is a River,
Called the River of No Return.
Sometimes it’s peaceful,
and sometimes, wild and free.

Love is a traveler,
on the River of No Return.
Swept on Forever,
to be lost in the stormy sea ! ”

She felt a vice grip on the trapezeus muscles by her neck.

“You are so tense. “the deep voice said.

She looked up. It was the man with the long nose, the green man. She let him rub her.

“That’s better. Don’t stop now. ”

Hard, he squeezed. So hard ! And then he let up on the tension.

She felt loose, relaxed.

He sat down on a chair beside her. Their eyes met again. Again, she saw the storm clouds gathering in those strange gray eyes.

“You look troubled. “He said.

“No. I’m just tired. “was her unconvincing reply.

“Had a rough day? ”

“You don’t know the half of it. “She said.

How do you explain to someone - to a man at that - the pent up emotions of a childless woman who had adopted countless patients as her children only to see them fly away from the

nest over the years. Sometimes they'd return. Sometimes they'd succeed out there. And sometimes, they would make it over, as Terri liked to put it. She remembered many years ago the first time she had found a suicide. A young girl had hanged herself. Analees had cut the now cold body down herself. That night she had had a dream of devils and of hell itself. Ever since, she had had a dread of suicide.

"Want to talk about it ? "

"No. I'm too tired to. "

He glanced over in the corner of the room where there were some stale cookies left over...

"Someone has had a party. "

"Just yesterday, another old timer retired. Where have all the years gone ?"

"Have you worked here for a long time ? "He asked.

"Twenty years. "

"That's a lifetime. Or at least it used to be. "The man smiled in a lop-sided way.

"These days not many stay in one place for twenty years. Times are changing. Me, I'm always moving on. But I've been here for a month now. " She took another sip of coffee. Sweet taste was so good ! She smiled at him, a forced smile : "I don't even know you're name."

"I'm Larry. Larry Longboat. "

"My name is Cleef. Analees Cleef. It used to be Van Cleef, but they anglicized it. "

"You're not wearing a wedding ring. "

"No. I'm not. "

She drained her coffee, and looked at her watch.

"Uh, my break is almost over, I've got to get back to the ward. "

"Maybe I'll see you in the park tomorrow. "

"Maybe. "

Chapter Four: a Date with Destiny ?

Analees checked herself over as she had a quick morning coffee in her office. She felt that she looked sharp: black jumper dress and pale brown blouse, black hose, and green suede boots. It gave her a sort of out - doorsy look. She smiled to herself as she thought of her undies, nice clean green undies, the color of cuprous flame. You never know, if you wind up in hospital or something, well, a nurse just has to set a good example, with clean underwear. It did occur to her that she was really dressing more for a date than for work. Well, she would go to the park on her break...and that strange man with the broken nose was always there when she was.

She stepped onto the ward. She was greeted by two excited teenage girls.

"The Night nurse said we could go swimming tomorrow. "said Terri

"Can we ? Can we ? "Little Lee was jumping up and down.

Sometimes patients are allowed to go off hospital grounds in order to go swimming at the local Radisson hotel. Analees was often in charge of such expeditions, since she loved to go swimming herself. Terri was quick to point out that the white French-Canadian explorer for whom the hotel system was named had once been adopted by the Mohawk.

"Gee, you don't miss much, Terri, like, I really wanted to know that."

"Well, now you do know it, Little Papoose."

When given the chance to go swimming, the two girls eagerly accepted. But first, they had to get a bathing suit for Lee.

"Come with me to the ward store room. "said Analees.

She led the girls down the hall and unlocked a small room that seemed to be stuffed with old clothing. The tiny teenager emerged wearing a pea green bathing suit. Terri giggled.

"What's so funny, kid? "

"I know that bathing suit. It belonged to another patient, Mary Jo. She made it over last year. "

"Freaky. I'm wearing a dead girl's things. Did you like Mary Jo? "

"Yeah. She was cool. She did it by jumping off a bridge. My voices said she flew like an angel. "

"If you liked her, you gotta like me too, if I'm wearin' her stuff. "

Nurse Analees Cleef said, with a bit of formality in her voice : "After her suicide, her family donated her old clothes to the ward. After all, she wouldn't be needing them any more. It's still a nice bathing suit. And it does fit you. "

Terri nodded : "It does look good. "

"Well. O.K. I'll use it. It just feels kind of...different, you know. Wearing a dead girl's things. "

Analees looked forward to going out with them as their chaperone. Sometimes when she took patients on outings like this, she would pretend in her own mind that they were her own children.

"Keep track of those, Lee. Now, girls, go get lined up for breakfast. "

A passing patient, a fat old man dressed in a Regal robe of purple and white, groaned that Analees sounded like the recreational director on a cruise ship.

Terri said that purple and white were the color of wampum in the early days. She thought of how her people had given wampum as an offering of peace and friendship. She smiled to herself. You couldn't fool her on the lore of her people.

Lee was dressed in a mauve T-shirt, white jeans, and white Reebok running shoes with

purple trim. She wore the colors of wampum, without even knowing it. That had to be significant.

As they walked towards the dining room at the end of the ward, Terri said :

“Let’s be friends.”

“O.K. I’m new here. I need a friend. ”

“I been here a long time and I still need a friend.

“Is it that bad?

“What do you think? ”

There was a brief silence, then Lee said : “Boy, it’s a relief. ”

“What is? ”

“Getting that admission stuff over with. ”

“You almost seem relieved to be here. ”

“I am. ”

“Why? I want outa here...”

“What for? What’s out there for us? ”

“Freedom. ”

“Freedom for what? For other people to do things to us ? ”

“Freedom to do our own thing. ”

“Oh, well. How’s the staff here?

“Snotty. Except for him. ”

She gestured to a man alone in a corner of the room with a broom. He was sweeping the floor. He was dressed in green overalls.

“You mean the janitor? “Lee giggled nervously.

“He’s a nice guy. That’s all that matters.”

The janitor was tall and thin and bent over. His face was red, like it had been burnt by the sun. He had a long nose, twisted as if it had once been broken. The nose, and his craggy face, made him look hard, but he had a soft friendly smile and kind gentle brown eyes. Tufts of white hair, like corn husks, seemed to caress his cheeks.

Terri leaned over and touched Lee on the knee. She whispered confidentially :

“He looks just like False Face. You know the story of the First False Face? Well, I guess you don’t know. Many have seen the Iroquois masks of False Face. But not many know his story. ”

“Tell me, then. I’m all ears.”

“They say that when the world was newly made, like a baby, the Creator walked upon it. He met another Spirit also walking on the earth. He also claimed that he was the Creator. So the two Spirits had a contest. In that contest, the other fellow’s nose was broken, and his face became distorted. He begged for mercy, and he got it.”

The stranger still wanted to be involved with people, to help them in their pain. Now he knew what pain was like himself. So the Creator let him stay on earth. They say that even today he is hiding beyond the rim of the horizon, where the sky glows red as his face. ”

“That’s neat and all, but what does that mean to me? Eh, Terri ? Eh? And how does it effect you? ”

“We’re in a hospital, aren’t we Lee ? False Face is the beginning of Iroquois medicine. I wish we could try it. White man’s medicine does nothing but keep us locked up. ”

“How do you know all about Indians?

“Because I’m a Mohawk. ”

Just then a bell rang.

“It’s breakfast time, little Papoose. Let’s see what they are putting in the trough today. ”
The two new friends joined the line-up at the door to the dining room. The line was a scruffy cross section of the have nots of a society that wants it all. Some of the people lined up just never had it. Some never made it. Some never wanted it in the first place.

Soon, they sat together in a corner. They saw Nurse Cleef, who seemed to be looking at them.

Actually, Nurse Cleef’s mind was elsewhere. The cooks had made too much food, and there was some nice strips of bacon left over. In the good old days, staff could have a little snack. Now the efficiency experts had dictated that everything that is not used by the patients must be thrown out, and had set up surveillance cameras to make sure that it was. Analees wondered how efficient it was to waste perfectly good food. But then, that’s progress for you.

Terri nudged Lee : “Come on, there’s something I want to show you.”

So they joined the line at the door. Looking back, Lee could see Nurse Cleef at the desk in the glass enclosed nursing station. Today, she was wearing a black jumper and a brown blouse with padded shoulders. She looked like the captain on the bridge of a ship. Always in command.

The door to the locked ward clicked open, and the motley group sauntered out to meet the day. Down a long hall they went, then turned into a shorter hall with a dead end.

“This is O.T. , Lee. ”

“Terri, I think O.T.s are all pretty much the same.”

“Occupational Therapy !”snarled Lee. “So we can all get jobs in basket weaving when we get out of hospital.”

“Sounds just like university.”said a passing patient, a thin middle aged man with the graying beard of a Philosophy student. The patient walked away, lost again in some private hell.

“Come to the art room with me - nurse, let Lee come do art today also. Please.”

An overweight occupational therapist nodded approval :

“O.K., you’ve got to start somewhere while we assess you.”

“Yay ! ”

Lee’s face lit up. She didn’t want to leave her friend.

The art room was by the end of the hall. They passed people doing woodworking and sewing. The overall impression was one of splotches of brown and gray, only the splotches were people, not paint. Terri felt that paint had more personality and frequently said so.

At last, they came to the art room.

The art therapist greeted Lee : “Would you like to try paint by numbers?”

“O.K. Can I pick one to paint.”

“Sure, we have several kits. Come over here and look through them. You can do any kit you want.”

“I’m beyond all that.”said Terri. She had gone over to a corner where a large canvass on an easel backed into the room. It was set up so that the artist could get light from the window. “Let me show you.”

“She’s been working at that painting for a week.”said the therapist. “She’s pretty good at art. ”

“Here - see. ”

Terri lifted the almost finished oil painting and turned it so that everyone could see it. It was at least a yard square.

The first impression was soothing, sky blue, turquoise green. A Giant Turtle swam through sparkling blue waters. On its back was a clump of brown earth covered with a little green forest. There was a tiny village with several Longhouses and a gray wood palisade. And

above, the smiling silver sun looked on from a distance.

“Hey - really neat, Terri !”exclaimed Lee. “What is it? I know it’s a turtle and all, but, like, what does it mean?”

“Like it’s our story, Lee. It’s creation of the world, only it’s still going on today.”

“Like the Book of Genesis?”

Like the Iroquois book of Genesis. In the beginning there were the waters and the animals that lived there. Then the sky woman fell from among the stars. The great turtle saw this and told the others to bring him earth from beneath the waters. They did so. They dove beneath the waves, and they brought forth earth and placed it on the back of the great Turtle. And trees and shrubs and grasses grew from the earth. The sky mother lived there and in time, the people would come to live there also, born from her thoughts. Now all the world rides on the back of the Great Turtle, just like it is shown in my painting.”

“But Terri, isn’t that just like saying the earth is flat? ”

“Little Bean, you just don’t understand. Like, it’s all poetic, see? The Great Turtle is the Living Earth that carries us on its back, while it swims through the invisible waters of outer space.”

“Yeah. Cool.”Lee went back to looking at the kits.

Outside, Analees hurried by to her park bench appointment. She smiled as she glanced in at Terri and her painting. She had heard Terri’s turtle theory before. She thought that it must be a nice way of looking at the world.

She walked briskly towards the park bench she always sat on, trying to look liberated, the way a modern professional woman was supposed to look.

She glanced around. In the distance, the old buildings of the previous hospital stood by, silent witnesses to the drama of on going life. Those buildings still gave her the shivers, as if they were haunted. The official word was that the buildings were unsafe. For that reason, barbed wire fencing had been erected around them. Unofficially, there were rumors that some sort of secret government research was going on there. In the fifties, those buildings had been used for CIA / LSD experiments designed to create zombie killers. BRRR.

She sat down on her bench and waited for her man, like a fisherman with a pole in the water. Gray clouds began to swirl about in the sky. She saw the man coming. She opened her pocket book. Photos taken when she was a teenager showed that Marilyn Monroe, the most famous blonde in the world, was really a brunette.

“Hi !”said Larry Longboat’s husky voice as he sat down beside her.

“Good book ?”

“Yes, it is. You know, Marilyn Monroe was almost a spy, just like Mata Hari.”

“I have a book that I am reading, too.”

He carried a weathered leather covered tome. “It is about a man who became a spokesman for the dream world. His name was Handsome Lake. “He traveled, sharing his vision among the Iroquois in the harsh years after contact.”

“Contact ?”

“Contact with the Europeans. For the Iroquois back then, it brought on many changes. Like it would be for people today if Exta-terrestrials landed. Well, Handsome Lake was sort of like that guy on TV who is using Nostradamus prophecies to ward off an invasion from space. Only in his day, the diseases of the White man were already here among us, and they spread like storm clouds across the sky. ”

The sky above was getting much darker now, threatening to rain. They heard the sound of distant thunder. He said : “To men like Handsome Lake, there were gods that ruled the

weather. They were called the Thunderers.”

“Not very scientific.”

“Such men did not think in ones and zeros, they saw with eyes of poetry.”

The sky began to spit. They stood and started to run together towards the hospital. As they reached the door, she turned and said to him : “I would like to hear more about this Handsome Lake of Yours. ”

“I’m on again tomorrow. ”

“Same time, same place ?”She smiled at him.

He smiled back. There was an unsettling look of confidence in his gray eyes.

After O.T., the patients were marched back to their ward, like a rag tag band of citizen soldiers from some long forgotten war. The two teenage girls, now fast friends, sat together in the corner of the common room. Analees was watching, from a distance.

“Listen up, Lee. I’ll tell you another story. In the early days, when the people had great magic Red Cloud was a great warrior of a tribe that lived out west, out past the lakehead. They had great wars with the Sioux. The Sioux had a great leader, the Black Chief. Wherever he led them, they left charred bodies behind. It was said that the Black chief was a great wizard. One day, he led his tribe into Red Cloud’s land. And one morning, when it was foggy, Red Cloud became part of the fog and crept into the Sioux camp. He came to the teepee of the Black Chief. There, he slew the enemy of his people while the man slept. Then he became one with the fog again, and drifted away.

You know, that’s my boyfriend’s name - Red Cloud. When he was born, there was a red cloud among the stars. Some day he’ll come for me. ”

“If he exists.”

“I’ll be lying in bed and he’ll come like a thief in the night. Just you wait and see.”

“Sure. Sure.”

“You, too Lee? You’re just like Nurse Cleef. She thinks I made him up. Even if I did, that’s better than I can get around here. ”

“Cool. It’s O.K., Terri. I won’t tell. I like Red Cloud. He sounds kinda cute, the way he killed the guy while he slept. ”

“You know, Lee, we really shoulda been sisters. ”

“I would have liked that. ”

“We can still be sisters, Lee.”

“Why do I get the feeling you are gonna lay something way out on me? ”

“Because I am. Sounds like you’ve got to know me.”

“O.K., shoot. ”

“Look, Lee, in the old days when people were close to nature, sometimes there were special friendships. Like, sometimes people that were not related became blood brothers. Like they would cut their wrists and mingle their blood. Their blood would flow into one another. Well, we could do that too. We could become blood sisters. Then, you’ll be a Mohawk, too.”

“Do I have to wear my hair Mohawk style?”

“No. I’ll let you get away without that. But you still have to cut your wrists.”

“I’m not afraid of that. I’ve got a lot of experience cutting my wrists. ”

“But this will be different. we’re not killing ourselves. We’re celebrating our friendship and sealing our sisterhood. ”

“Cool.”

“Come with me, then. I have part of a razor blade hid in one of my boots. That will do the trick.”

Lee followed Terri to her room. Both girls were still in their dressing gowns. Terri got a large black platform boot .”

“Lee, you never know when a girl’s gonna need a razor blade!”“And you’ve got to be awful careful hiding contraband around here. Some of the people around here are crazy. ”

She reached into the boot and drew out a small silver gray piece of steel.

“Come here, Lee. Look, I’ll go first in cutting my wrist. There, see how the blood gushes out? Now it’s your turn. There, that’s got you bleeding too. Now we hold our wrists together. Let our blood mingle. Now we become the sisters we were meant to be.”Suddenly, a staff member came upon them. The girls were holding their bleeding right wrists together in a sort of high five move. The staff blew a shrill whistle, and an alarm of some sort went off in the office. There was a great scurrying of nurses rushing to and fro.

“Get the duty doctor. Get the duty doctor.”

In the mass confusion that followed, nobody asked the girls what they were doing. They just assumed that it was a suicide attempt.

CHAPTER FIVE : “into the night and the fog ”

In the darkness, Terri lay back on her bed in the hospital room. Her prayers went up like smoke from the cigarette she was smoking. Of course, smoking in bed was against the rules. That was all the more reason to smoke in bed.

The staff were trying to break the two girls' friendship by separating them. That troubled Terri's soul. She could not bear to lose yet another friend.

The hospital itself is built like a sort of binary solar system with two stars joined by a tunnel. Each star was a cluster of wards circling a central foyer like planets in orbit. Terri's planet orbited the North Star; and it was a locked ward. This morning, they had moved Lee to the South cluster, also to a locked ward. All that fuss over a simple Indian ritual Terri had invented. Some people just have no imagination.

This was serious - like for real. The two girls might never see each other again ! And they had just become blood sisters, too!

As she lay there watching the smoke swirl upward, Terri felt that Lee was her only friend in the whole world. She lay back. Her breath sent the smoke up to whatever spirits could help her. Finally, her cigarette done, she fell off into deep and yet troubled sleep. She felt that, like the legendary Bigfoot, she was moving back and forth between dimensions. A strange mist surrounded her as she walked along a dark pathway. She was awakened from her sleep by a touch on her arm. She was startled - What was this? Was her brother back in her bedroom? Icicles of fear shot up her spine like a knife.

There was a whisper : “Don't worry, big sister--it's only me.”

It was Little Lee.

Terri sat right up and gasped with joy: “How did you get here?”

“Shhh.”

Terri saw a shadowy figure standing behind Lee. It was their friend, the Janitor, looking like a dark green ghost. His whisper was soft, like a summer breeze: “You girls, come with me if you want to be free.”

“Walk in great silence.” said Lee.

She had also dressed and carried a dark green garbage bag, the symbol of homelessness.

“Let me get my clothes.” said Terri in a whisper.

Soon, the three of them crept slowly down the hall, lit only by the red fire EXIT sign at the other end. They walked towards it and away from the nursing station, the foyer, offices, the dining room. They left all that behind them.

The Janitor used his keys to open the fire exit. He led them down another flight of stairs and let them out another door, and, ZOWIE! They were outside in the fresh night air of summer!

“Careful, my little friends. We have a long way to go yet. Follow...” They did follow him.

Somehow, these two crazy, ultra-paranoid rape victims followed this strange stranger off into the darkness on a foggy night. They were both dopey, as if entranced by some mysterious force.

The strange Janitor led them to a jeep in the parking lot. He got in the driver's side and opened the passenger door. The girls climbed in without a word. He turned the key in the ignition. The control panel lit up joyously, like a pet welcoming its master home. The engine purred like a cat. The girls hugged each other and felt warmth...in the damp night. The jeep glided out of the parking lot and onto a nearby highway.

They drove in silence for a few minutes, heading north. They went past empty schools and all night fast-food joints and gas stations, until the lights began to thin.

Terri, who sat protectively in the middle, turned to the driver.

“Where are we going? ”

“I will take you to a place where you will be safe. The people there will not try to split you up. You can be together for always.”

“Where is that?”

“We go to ‘the Village that Rises Again.’ You will like it there.”

“I never heard of it.”

“It’s a secret place. Only a few can find it. There are many Iroquois there, and many who have become Iroquois, too, because we adopted them. The blood of every continent flows in their veins of the New Nation.”

He turned and smiled at the girls.

“Just as each of your blood flows through the other.”

“All people can find shade under the tree of our new village. You will be happy there. Happy, and free from the World.”

The man glanced at his passengers again, looking them over for a few seconds. They could see his long, twisted nose in the lights of passing cars. His face was red, and his clothes were Christmas tree green. He had a Devil’s face but his eyes looked gentle and his smile was kind. And he had got them out of the hospital.

Terri sighed : “O.K. mister. You’re the only one who’s never let me down.”

Lee added: “Thanks for rescuing us. They could have broke us up. We’re real close, like two parts of a broken plate. Apart, we’d be fit only for the garbage bin. You know, she’s all the family I’ve got.”

“You will soon have many more family. You are not alone. This planet is full of outcasts.”

They drove on in silence for hours. The two girls hugged each other in silent communication more intimate than words can ever be.

One road led to another and then another, smaller road, ever smaller, northward, ever northward. Finally, both girls dozed.

They were awakened by a bump, and then another. They were somewhere out in the country, a strange country. It was still night.

They passed a bog. Ahead, they could see potholes in the road. Jeep lights shone on the water in each hole. It seemed as if they could glimpse the fiery innards of the earth itself. Above, the full pale moon looked down on them from behind a thin silver veil of cloud. The Janitor smiled at them and said : “Our grandmother the moon is looking out for us. She was put there to help us count the age of our children.”

Terri gasped with joy : “You’re one of us! You’re really one of us. You are Iroquois!”

“I am Oneida.”

“I just thought you had a sun burn or something. I never realized. I should have known. ”

They traveled on into a thick forest. Trees rose to either side, like a palisade. They twisted and turned and turned and twisted, as if they were going through a maze.

The Janitor spoke again: “Always remember, the forest is our friend. It can give us everything - food, medicine, shelter.”

This time Lee answered him: “Wow! This is great!”

Terri squeezed her and said : “Remember, little sister...You are one of us

now as well. I made you a Mohawk. “

“Neat - oh, neat!”

They drove on and on until the girls fell asleep again. They awoke to a glorious dawn. Before them was a cyber age Iroquois village built with modern technology. Rows of fiberglass Longhouses glistened gold in the light of the rising sun.

“From the air it looks like just another farm.”He said.

In front of the building before them, they saw a gigantic statue of three women who were entwined together. They wore only skirts, as was the ancient Iroquois tradition in the summer months. The bold figures were also painted gold by the rising sun. Terri whistled with admiration and then said : “These are the three sisters : The Corn Maiden...”

“That’s you. Big sister.”

“The bean ?”

“That’s me. You’ve been calling me ‘ Little Bean’. And I am your sister.”

“And what about the ‘squash’ ?”

“That’s got to be Nurse Cleef. She ain’t so bad. She was gonna take us swimming. An’ she can look like a squash. Well, sorta like a squash, if you use your imagination a lot.”

“O.K. So, she’s our sister squash.”

“That means we gotta rescue her from the white man’s society.”

“Yeah. I guess we do. Then we’ll adopt her, and make her follow our Iroquois ways.”

“And she will be happy with us. She will be our patient. And we will cure her of the ways of the white man.”

“Neat ! I always wanted to have a nurse for a patient.”

CHAPTER SIX : “Nursing Administration”

The tension was like an over stretched girdle about to snap. In the office of the Hospital Administrator, you could feel that tension as strong as the smoke in a bar full of bikers.

Nurse Cleef was on the carpet. Two girls had escaped during her shift. She was supposed to be especially careful about Big Terri, who was thought to be dangerous. Now the nurse stood uneasy, before the new hospital administrator. She was stiff, in a starched white uniform, worn only for formal occasions. Somehow, she felt as if she were on trial. In a sense, she was.

The administrator leaned back and steepled his hands in a “prayer” form, using body language to express self-confidence. His crisp navy blue power suit and crew cut Nazi blonde hair bespoke his credentials as an American efficiency expert, one of a new breed hired to reform Canada’s Health Care system. He even had the cold blue eyes of an S.S. officer.

Nurse Cleef had just been transferred to the ward of no return, where hopeless patients are sent to die. She knew that she’d have lots of bed sores to clean and bedpans to empty. There would be pseudo - grieving relatives to talk to. That sort of hypocrisy was worse than the bedpans. It just involved a different sort of shit, that’s all.

The look on the nurse’s face was so harsh, you’d think she had overdosed on prune juice.

The man’s words were spoken so softly it reminded her of the slimy things she’d have to do on her new ward. He reminded her of a snake. No doubt he’d someday run for political office. But she was the one who’d be cleaning up the shit.

“If the ward was locked as it was supposed to be, how did they get out? With their own keys? Or did they miraculously pass through the walls like ghosts? Now I know some of you have been using the night shift to catch up on your beauty sleep.”

Nurse Cleef gulped hard as she let out a gentle fart that she hoped would not be noticed. She reminded herself that big brave nurses are never scared. She tried to make her voice sound strong : “I have worked here for twenty years.”

She knew all too well that some of the women she started work with so long ago had been bullied into early retirement. One of them had even killed herself. Nurse Cleef had felt that the system had murdered the woman, but she kept her peace at the time. She knew better than to be outspoken. Now, as she went on, her voice was almost brittle with bitterness :

“Look, my patients were like the children I never had. I tried to give them order in their lives, the kind of order they never had at home - discipline and organization in their lives, personal cleanliness.”

She was getting flustered.

“I know, I know...”the administrator intervened. “It’s not like the good old days when I was in the U.S. marine corps. There you never had to think for yourself. In fact, thinking wasn’t allowed. You know, people have been drinking themselves into a stupor for thousands of years to try to escape from independent thought. What about your drinking, Nurse Cleef? Think about it.”

So, after twenty years of exemplary work, Nurse Analees Cleef was given her first official reprimand. It was a blemish that would forever stain a work record that was otherwise as clean as a proper nurse’s uniform.

Now she was exiled to a Geriatric unit used for the old and the dying misfits of the psychiatric hospital, and for the freaks. Everyone knew about this one pin-headed microcephalic midget who could hit any bulls -eye with a wad of spit from across the room. There was also a tall red haired youth who just sat there, moving his head from side to side, screaming, always

screaming. And, of course, all of the patients were always being incontinent. And the staff sent there were never transferred back from the ward of no return.

She had some time off coming, so she said she'd take it. She'd need a few days of to get used to the change. Because this was a union job, she did still have some rights, so they had to let her take the time. She had earned it.

Nurse Cleef left the nursing office. She heard the door go CLICK behind her, like a period at the end of a sentence. She choked back tears as she thought of the stench. Things like this should never happen to a nice little Dutch girl like Analees, one who had always taken pride in being as immaculate as the Virgin Mary. Well, sort of...if you skip over a splotch or two when she was a teenager.

Somewhere out there those two young girls were enjoying the fresh spring air of late May. That's what hurt her most of all. She swore she'd get even, whatever the cost.

Alone, she walked along empty halls and let her mind travel back in time. Many years ago, she had come here, to this hospital, full of hope about how she could help people. She wondered, now, how much of her soul had been burned out of her. She felt a bit sick as she went down to her locker. She did have some stats coming, and, by God, she was going to use them. Maybe she might even take a bit of sick leave, too. She had quite a bit of that accumulated. Over the years, she had really been quite conscientious. She was SO ANGRY! But where could she go? What could she do about it? Wasn't there some song that went : "Helpless, helpless"? That is just how she felt.

The last few years of her life flew before her. Hell, the nursing profession she entered was a caring profession, not some fucking business school. She gathered some phlegm in her throat. Glancing around to see that she could not be seen, she spat on the floor. Somehow, she felt as if she were spitting out her whole nursing career.

She stared blankly ahead as she trudged towards the staff locker room.

She felt empty, like her heart had become a black hole into which her whole life had been drawn.

Then she heard the slow, heavy voice of Larry Longboat. "Hallo Analees. Is something worrying you ? "

"Oh, Hi, Larry." She felt a bit relieved to leave her own thought world.

"You look upset."

"I am upset."

"I got a coffee break comin' now. Want to come and talk about it ? "

"Yes. Uh. OK. yes." She knew that she hardly knew him. She did not know why, but she felt driven to talk to someone. Anyone. Even to the Janitor. But this guy was something more than just the janitor, to her, at least. There was something strange about him, something special.

He set his broom down beside the big blue garbage pail he had beside him. They walked together, now, along the empty halls that led to the staff cafeteria. They walked slowly. He put his arm around her back. She felt comforted.

They each got a coffee from a machine and both sat down together at a small table. Analees could remember how this room seemed always filled when all the wards of the hospital were open. Nowadays, the hospital was like a ghost town in the old west.

His usually stormy eyes now became a soft and comforting pussy cat gray.

"What's wrong?" He asked.

Her words spun round like laundry in a Laundromat, a swirling blur of color, as she told him what had happened. His smiling silence supported her more strongly than any spoken word could do. When at last she had sung her song to the end, Larry Longboat placed his hand in hers. He smiled gently.

“You would do well to take a real break, to get away for a few days. I have the next five days off, too. Come up north with me. The air is clear there, and you can think better.”

“Where up north?” Her voice was a mix of emotion and nervousness. But the idea did sound a bit adventurous.

“My family have a small cottage just north of Haley’s Comet. It is not too rough, if that worries you. You can see the land and the water, free and clear like they are supposed to be.”

She looked into his eyes. Could she trust him? Well, right now, she felt as if she had nothing to lose, anyway. She smiled at him and sighed: “What do I need to bring?”

“Just enough clothes for a week. I’m well stocked with food and everything else up there.” He said. “I’ll pick you up at six tomorrow morning.”

“It’s fifty two Moon Street.”

“I’ll find it.”

She left him with a brave smile. Soon, she was driving home in her small green Volkswagen New Bug. On the way to her recently paid for house, she stopped at the Jolly Roger Video store to pick up the tape she had reserved.

She entered through the turnstile to see a life sized cardboard mock - up of the latest incarnation of James Bond pointing a gun at her. Behind Bond was a bevy of glamorous beauties. Analees Cleef, a very ordinary nurse, wondered what it would be like to be part of such a gaggle of girls. She also wondered what a real life James Bond type would be like - in bed. Where else would you want a real life James Bond type ?

She remembered her favorite Bond movie. She had identified with the bad girl who wore a red scuba top in the publicity photos. The movie’s theme really got to her. She twisted it around in her mind : “She always runs when others walk... Then she strikes like Thunderball! ”

Hmm. She hadn’t seen a Bond movie in a long, long time. Maybe it was time to rent one again. Soon. But for tonight, she already had a movie.

So she went to the counter and showed them her membership card and got them to punch it for her. Then she got her movie, a current hit entitled “the Mummy”. As she looked at the jacket that the movie wore, she remembered the old “Mummy” movies. As a little girl, she would beg and plead and nag until she was allowed to stay up late to see “Shock Theater” on channel seven from Detroit. She thought of black and white movies in which the moldy Mummy would be kept alive by an ancient Egyptian priest who would invoke “Amon Ra, whose anger can shatter the world.”

“Three tana leaves give it life, nine tana leaves give it motion.” Sounds like a cure for a hangover. Then the mummy would dutifully rise and drag himself through the swamp lands of the Southern United States looking for the pretty girl who was his lover reincarnated. All good, clean fun, like buttered popcorn and making out at the movies. Oh, to be a teenager and start all over again!

With her usual perfect driver efficiency, she drove home.

The first thing she did when she got home was to pack for her little holiday. She was still efficient, even if it didn’t matter any more.

She packed two large travel bags. She quickly figured what items of clothing she would need : two brown towels, one extra pair of blue jeans, several turtlenecks and T - shirts, a half dozen pairs of white socks. Let’s see now...underwear. Now there she would draw the line. Quickly, six pairs of silk undies went into the mix, a seventh for good measure. There were blues and greens and even a pink pair just for the hell of it. She wasn’t

going to rough it when it came to underwear. Then she threw in a red silk nightie, black hose, and shiny black high heels to match, just to give him a hint if he needed one.

“Hell !”She said. “What good have all those years of being good done me? I might as well have a little fun.”

Then she set out to relax for her movie. She stripped down to her golden, very un - Nurselike underwear, and put on a comfy black dress and gold sandals.

Beginning to relax at last, she realized that she was hungry. Hell! She did not feel like cooking supper tonight. She snatched a TV dinner from the freezer and nuked it. She gobbled a meal of potatoes, corn, and barbecued meatballs covered with a spicy red gravy. She especially enjoyed breaking the meatballs up with her teeth and crushing them with her tongue.

Then it was time to watch the movie. She didn’t have any Popcorn, but she did have a nice big glass of dark red wine.

As the flick came on the screen in front of her eyes, she got lost in the movie’s preamble. There, the Pharaoh’s Mistress got caught having an affair with the Head Master of the House of the Dead. It seemed that she was also wearing a black dress and golden sandals.

Ordinary Nurse Analees Cleef began to imagine herself as the Pharaoh’s Mistress. Soon, in her mind, she was sitting on luxurious gold pillows. She squashed purple grapes in her mouth. She could even feel the grapes go “squish”.

She got another glass of wine. Somehow, the movie got lost in the grapes and the wine. Maybe that is why she concluded that she enjoyed it. Analees often thought that the best movies dissolved in grapes and wine.

When the movie ended, she went to bed. Maybe, she thought, she should get a cat. Or maybe two cats, so they could keep each other company. One of the girls at work had two cats, and Analees thought that sounded like a good idea. Neat. Sort of symmetrical, like the ancient pyramids themselves. If you can’t build a pyramid, get two cats.

She changed into a loose black nightie, and soon dozed off.

That night, she had a vivid dream. In it, she wrote her own version of “the Mummy”.

Just like in the movie she had just seen, the Pharaoh’s mistress is discovered with the Lord of the House of the Dead. The Pharaoh threatens her, so she kills him with her dagger. Then the two lovers are caught. Then, the movie in her mind departs from the movie script.

In her dream, she is to be buried alive. They wrap her up as a mummy. She is very hot. She feels that she will suffocate. They wrap her body, then her head...soon, all that is left unwrapped are her eyes. She looks at the wall across from her. She sees an Ankh, the Egyptian cross of life. Then her whole life in ancient Egypt flashes before her eyes.

As a child she was chosen to be a High Priestess of Best, the Goddess of Cats. Chosen for her intelligence as well as her looks, she was trained at the Temple of Isis, who embodied the Goddess of the Cats. There, she met Cariss, who was to become the Lord of the House of the Dead. When her education had been completed, she was chosen by Pharaoh to become his Mistress. She also became his confidante, since he considered his wife, who was also his kid sister, ten years younger than he was, to be too stupid to be trusted. In time, the Pharaoh’s mistress became very powerful, almost a prime minister. Then, she took on a lover, the Head Master of the House of the Dead. He taught her the wondrous ways of the Spirit World. And then, their liaison was discovered.

Analees Cleef woke up. 4 am. As usual at that time, she had to go to the bathroom. As she shed a few ounces of hate, she thought of how her dreams were so much more colorful

than her real life.

Soon, she was back asleep, but unfortunately, her connection with ancient Egypt had been broken.

Chapter Seven: "This'll Show Them."

Analees rose early and breakfasted with a toasted cheese sandwich and black coffee, dressed only in her black silk nightgown. As usual.

She felt like the psycho bitch from hell. She thought:

"Hell, if being a good girl got me onto the ward of no return, I might as well go out and have a little fun!"

She went to her bedroom and put on a pair of green silk undies.

"I need something soft next to my skin." She said to herself. "I'm not going to be that tough!"

Then she got dressed in the best "tough woodswoman" outfit she could come up with. She wore a dark evergreen turtleneck and pale blue jeans, and added what she thought was the final touch : a brown leather vest she had got on sale. She thought it was neat, for it had a strong leathery smell that seemed sort of sexy. She did up the belt.

She felt empowered as she put on her old green suede boots, noting that they no longer made sued boots in green. She longed for the heyday of women's boots in her teenage years, when they were the very symbol of "FEM / POWER". Like everything else these days, the world of fashion has become dark and dull.

For a second, she thought of how, as a little girl, she had longed to be an actress. In her years at High School, the many colored footlights of the stage had thrilled her. In contrast, her adult life had been so boring! Right now, she'd do just about anything to change that horrid life. But you cannot change the past. Maybe Larry Longboat could help her to change the future.

Just at that moment, she decided that she would let Larry do whatever he wanted to with her over the next few days. After all, she thought, "What have I got to lose?" She stood before the mirror, pushed out her ample chest, and yelled: "Yeah! This'll show them!"

There was a loud knock on the door.

Quickly, she double - checked the stove to see that everything was turned off: stove, lights, all off.

More knocking at the door.

"Tryin' to knock me up already?" She thought.

Eagerly, she ran to the door and opened it.

Larry Longboat looked very different today. He wore blue jeans, a blue - gray leather jacket, and dark blue cowboy boots. His clothes made her think of the sky, a warrior from the sky...

He smiled at her and said one word : "Comin'?"

She smiled at him.

He took her bags out to the trunk of his old silver gray car.

She grabbed her green leather jacket and followed him out after locking the door. She sat in the passenger seat and tied herself up with the seat belt.

In the back seat, an old black portable radio was set up with the antenna stuck out the window. Sixties music blared from the station that claimed to flow like a River. "North to Alaska..." She smiled. They weren't going that far north...were they? Well, she'd trust Larry.

North they went, ever northward. Their highway went from four lanes to two, and then got narrower. Larry was driving fast.

"People that live up north have to go fast." He said. "It's because of the distances

between places.“

Every once in awhile, a buzzer would go off, and he'd slow down.

“Hey, Analees, you ever have a fuzz buster?”

“Aren't they illegal?”

“Only if the cops catch you with one.”

She smiled. Right now, she liked that attitude. Somehow, she felt like a teenager all over again.

Soon, they were meeting fewer and fewer roads, and the roads they met were smaller. The forests 'round them changed as they drove into evergreen country. Now on either side of them, dark green trees rose and stood out against the pale blue sky, as if to proudly proclaim the creativity of mother earth.

After about four hours, they stopped at a diner. It was a rugged wood building built of pine logs. A big sign out front advertised fresh venison stew.

Larry pointed to the sign and said : “That is their special dish. It is very good.”

Tough Woodswoman Analees Cleef thought some food would be more than welcome. Even more, it would be nice to have a chance to go to the bathroom. She was relieved to find that the toilets were clean.

“That's always a good test of a restaurant.”She thought. “If the bathroom is clean, then the kitchen probably is, too.”

She sat down and sighed with relief. Her mind pictured a running stream in Springtime. Then she got up and scrubbed her hands, and went to join her man.

They sat at a small table near a window. All they could see out the window was dark brown earth and evergreen trees. The forest was surrounded them like the waves of a dark green sea.

Larry saw her looking out the window and said : “Once that was all there was. Forest. The people lived on small islands they had cleared, claiming small bits of land from a vast ocean of forest. The world of my people was very different back then.”

“I'd like to live in a different world.”She said.

“There is a lot of that world left, more than you would think. I'll show you some of it.”

“I'd like that.”She said.

The venison stew had a nice brown gravy that tasted delicious. The bread that come with it was freshly baked and sweet, and the coffee was warm and welcome.

The two of them ate in silence, letting their frequent eye contact speak for them.

Soon, they were off again, into the deep dark woods.

After another three hours, they came to a small brown trail that led them off the road. It was barely wide enough for one car, and it was very bumpy. They passed several cottages that seemed half hidden in the thick bush. Then they pulled into a small clearing. In front of them was an old log cabin. Not far beyond, they could see a vast expanse of water.

“This was my father's cottage.”said Larry. “I hope that you like it.”

“It looks like something out of a history book.”She said. “I love it.”

“It is real nice inside. You will see.”

“I like the view of the water.”

“Go look at it while I unload the car.”

She walked over to the shore, her boots padding on some mossy rocks. She inhaled. The air smelled fresh. She looked out over the water to the horizon. The sky was just beginning to turn to sunset hues.

Then she noticed, at the edge of the clearing, an old life guard tower.

“My father built that to watch us kids.” It was Larry’s deep voice. “Go climb on it and look out, while I get us some supper.”

She nodded. The view was overwhelming. She walked over to the tower, and slowly climbed it. There, she sat and watched the sunset, mindlessly allowing nature to flow through her. Her thoughts wandered to the point where the sea met the sky and then returned to her. Then it went out again. Soon, her mind’s wandering matched her own deep and rhythmic breathing. She was sitting in a mauve sky, above strange golden waters.

“Ready to come down for supper?” said the deep voice of her host from right behind her.

“Uh. Oh. Larry. Uh, sure. Man, what a view. I sort of got lost in it.” She turned and saw his rugged face, and she smiled. “Sure.” she said.

She got up and went over to the ladder and climbed down and followed him to the cottage.

The big wood door creaked open and she entered to be embraced by the strong smell of maple flavored baked beans. The main room doubled as a living room and a dining room. The walls were lined with furs, as was the floor.

“That’s the way it was in the time before.” said Larry, gesturing at the furs. “Our brothers the foxes and the bears kept us warm in the Longhouses, lining the walls for us to guard us from the howling winds of winter. If our hunters took their lives, we wasted nothing from it. It was not just a blood sport.”

Larry turned on a lamp. There was a television set in the corner of the room. There was also a fireplace in the center of the outward facing wall. A fire was already going there, giving the place a warm look.

“We do have electricity and running water. It’s not that wild up here. I try to have the best of both worlds, like electric lights and a fireplace. But I also try to revive just a bit of history here.”

Together they enjoyed a meal of beans and bacon, washed down with hard cider, sweet and cold. Again, as was becoming their custom, their eyes did most of their talking.

After they had eaten, he stood in front of the fireplace and began to undo his shirt. He smiled, and said : “Perhaps we should lie down in bed for awhile after supper, just to help our digestion.”

She saw his rugged torso, his hard muscles unweakened by any mid - life paunch. She went over to him. He seemed to tower over her. She looked into his eyes and said : “Shouldn’t you take your boots off first? You’re not an RCMP officer.”

He smiled and said : “How do you know that ?”

She knelt and removed his cowboy boots, one at a time. He was barefoot underneath. She kissed one of his feet lightly.

He helped her to her feet and kissed her hard on the mouth. His tongue probed hers. It still tasted of maple syrup, as did the little bit of his spittle that trickled into her mouth. Breaking only to catch his breath and let her catch hers, he kissed her repeatedly. She hugged him passionately, opening her mouth to his tongue.

She loosened his pants and they fell to the floor. She knelt and pulled them off of him.

He sat down on the couch. She sat down beside him. He placed her hand at his crotch. She felt something warm there, long, with a large circumference. Something told her that she was not going to be disappointed this night.

“Want to play with my war club?” He said.

This time it was her turn to be the strong silent type, as she let her fingers to the

walking. She tried to keep a straight face as she enjoyed the tactile pleasures. What she was feeling was long and firm with a big knob at the end.

“Do you like my big war club?”He asked.

Their eyes met. His eyes seemed to invite her to do something.

Beneath her belly, the little arrowhead that guarded her womb grew hard as flint.

Their eyes still held one another, as if in some sort of stare down. She stroked him slowly, enjoying the feel of it, admiring the length, and the great circumference. She felt the heat of his entire body radiating into her hand. She lowered her eyes, and was pleased by what she saw.

Smoothly, she slid down to her knees in front of him. Her head was spinning. She had not done this sort of thing in many years. She felt like a teenage girl again.

She kissed the end of it, letting her tongue flicker in and out of the little hole she found there. Then she lapped at the head of that great war club, as if it were a lollipop.

He smiled and said : “You didn’t have to do that. But don’t stop now, that feels good.”

Next, she pretended that she was a baby, sucking on her mother’s nipple. She felt so comfy she could spend the whole night doing that. She thought of she had read in a story of forbidden Tantric magic :

“Suck, until you become the sucking itself.”Still, she remembered that the milk that men produce is as bitter as most other things they do.

“Ahh. You do good,”He said. “But now, I have work to do.”

He reached down and lifted her to her feet. He hugged her warmly, and patted her behind. His deep voice somehow soothed her : “Come with me now.”He said. And he led her into the fur lined bedroom.

Gently he removed her jeans, and then her nice silk underwear.

He lowered her on to the bed, and rose over her, like a great grisly bear taking its prey. He entered her slowly, gently, a little bit at a time.

“This doesn’t hurt you, does it?”

“No.”She smiled, “But I’m still wearing my boots. “

“Then your boots can enjoy this, too.”

Inside her boots, her toes wiggled. It felt good, as if the energy of her pleasure were being returned back into her. Soon, he was all the way in. His body rubbed against her little arrowhead, and she just loved it.

On the walls, she saw light from the main room flickering, like the ghosts of ancient Iroquois dancing ‘round them as her heart pounded a drum beat.

“Yes. Yes. Yes.”was all she could say as they rocked gently back and forth. It felt as if they were surrounded by a cloud of golden energy.

Then a lighting bolt of energy shot though her, and it was done.

He rose, moving smoothly now, like a morning fog, so gently you could hardly sense the movement. He stood beside the bed, with his back to her, staring at the fireplace in the other room.

She looked over at him, and admired his glutes.

He turned and looked down at her. He spoke softly : “Would you like a drink ?”He asked.

“Yes.”She said, and then fell back and closed her eyes and rolled her belly with her breath as if to spread the waves of pleasure all around.

She sat up and he sat down beside her. He gave her a cup filled with sweet dark

rum.

“Here. Drink this down.”

Obediently, she did so. Then she fell back into oblivion.

Larry Longnose stood and looked down and smiled at his success.

He whistled under his breath : “Those date rape drugs are powerful medicine.” He thought. “But I really did want to make love to her first. “

He picked her up and slung her over his shoulder. He carried her out to his car. He opened the trunk and gently placed her in it. As he did so, her glistening skin shone in the light of the full moon. He slammed the trunk lid shut and got on with the rest of his business.

Chapter Eight : “There’s got to be a morning after ”

“Ohhh. Where am I ?”she groaned. She opened her eyes and looked beside her to see a long slender foot beside her face. Then she felt something rub against her other cheek. Another foot ?

“Ugh.”

Someone was playing “footsie”with her face.

Analees tried to get up. The best she could do was to raise her head. She saw that she was in a small compartment of some sort, lined with fur. Terri and Lee were there with her. They were lying in the opposite direction. Playfully, Terri pushed her foot into Analées’ face and rubbed it. Both girls giggled.

Analees fell back, groaning : “Ohhh, I’m going back to sleep.”

She fell back into oblivion, back to the world of dreams. In her dream, the patients had taken over the hospital and one of them was using the Head Nurse’s face to wipe her dirty feet clean.

When she awoke again, she was alone. She sat up, slowly. She realized that she was only partly dressed. She still wore her leather vest. It’s strong smell filled her nostrils. She had her boots on. But nothing else. She had neither pants nor panties. Something had happened to her. She tried to remember. Yes, she had let Larry make love to her. Then he gave her that rum, and she blacked out. Christ, he’d given her a date rape drug! She would have done anything he wanted any way. What had she missed? What a rotten trick - giving a date rape drug to a willing woman! She felt empty inside.

She looked around. She was in a small compartment of some sort, lined with fur. That fur gave the place a wild, even savage look. She felt her heart beginning to pound.

She found a flap that opened, forming a sort of doorway to the rest of this strange world that she was in. She had a strange thought: was she still alive? Maybe she had, well, gone over as they say. Well, there was only one way to find out. She poked her head through the flap.

Gingerly, she leaned forward and examined her surroundings. She was in a long hall, dimly lit by what appeared to be artificial flames. It looked like electric lights, but they were flickering like the flames of a dozen little fires burning along the center of the room.

Other compartments similar to her own lined either side of the room. In some the flaps were open and you could see inside, in others, they were closed and all you could see was a fur cover. Light and shadow danced along the hall, like spirits from the long dead past. This was a barracks of some sort, or maybe a strange hotel.

There was a noise at one end of the hall. Analées instinctively pulled her head back inside her compartment. She heard voices. Girls giggling. She rolled back onto her fur “mattress”. It did no good.

Terri pulled the flap back. She wore a yellow skirt and moccasins, but otherwise, she was topless. She carried a tray.

“Welcome, sister.”

“I’m Analées Cleef. My rank is “nurse”and I don’t know my serial number.”

“Well, have some of our cereal, then.”Terri smiled warmly at her.

She wasn’t dead. Or dreaming. Somehow, she had wound up with her two escaped patients. And here, they were in charge.

Lee was with Terri. She spoke, coldly : “They tell me that you are our sister now. Or that you soon will be. I guess right now you are sort of an apprentice sister.”

“Apprentice sister? What the hell is this anyway ? And where is Larry Longboat?”

“Relax. You’ve got all the time in the world to find out.”again, Terri smiled, sweetly.

“Here, we’ve brought you some breakfast.”

They placed a tray beside her. A silver bowl rose above it, like a dome.

Lee spoke, sounding almost clinical, like a nurse showing a new patient around a hospital ward. “Most of us eat in this crazy dining room that they have. You’ll see it soon. It’s even better than the one at the hospital, because you can reach over the counter and swipe a few extra handfuls of food if you want to. There’s no staff watching you. Except us. We’re supposed to keep an eye on you. It will be just like the hospital, only here, you are the patient. And we are the staff.”

Terri lifted a shiny lid from the tray. A big bowl of soup stood in the middle of the tray. Two big chunks of bread lay on a plate beside it. It smelled like it had been freshly baked, and it was still warm to the touch.

Terri said proudly: “Nice corn soup and fresh baked corn bread to go with it. I baked the bread myself.”

She took a spoonful and offered it to Analees who took a mouthful. It did taste good. Then Terri tore off a bit of bread and placed that in Analees’ mouth.

“Mmmm...that is good, Terri.”

She chewed it. It was sweet and fresh. She swallowed. As soon as she opened her mouth, there was another spoonful of soup waiting. Quickly, she swallowed that, then snapped : “Hey, I’m an adult. I don’t need to be fed!”

Lee giggled : “They feed adults all the time at your old hospital. Sometimes they even feed the patients when they don’t want to eat.”

Analees noticed that Lee also wore a yellow skirt, and no top.

“What?”gasped Analees. “What are you talking about?”

“I’ve seen them force feed the old people there.”said Lee. “And you are older than we are.”

Terri took Analees’ hand gently, and squeezed it a bit, and said : “You are the patient here, and we are your nurses. We’re supposed to help you to adjust. ”

“Oh, all right. I’ll go along with your little game for now. But please, let me feed myself.”

“O.K. “said Lee. “If you think you can.”

“Shoot! I was having fun pretending that she was my Barbie doll.”said Terri.

The two girls giggled.

Analees’ face flushed red. She felt a bit dizzy, disoriented. Still, she managed get her legs over the side of the compartment so that she was sitting. She took the tray on her lap and began to eat.

As she ate, she asked again : “Where is Larry Longboat?”Then, after a pause, she asked : “What has happened to me? Where am I?”

Terri sat on one side of her and placed her long arm around her shoulder. Lee sat on the other side of her.

Terri acted as the spokeswoman : “You are in a Longhouse in a village in the New Huronia. New Huronia is now part of the New Iroquois Confederacy, just as the old Huron Confederacy had once been. In the old days, the Huron tried to leave us, and we just could not let that happen, any more than the American president Lincoln could let the South secede. But now we are all together and happy again, in the New Iroquois Confederacy. For now, as this new day has dawned, our leader, Handsome Lake, has shared his visions with us. As a result, a New

Iroquois culture has arisen here, based on the spiritual ways of the Old Iroquois. Our way is the way of caring and sharing.”

“What are they going to do with me, Terri ?”

“We want to adopt you, to make you part of our band.”

“What if I don’t want to be adopted?”

“Then you go into the fire!”said Lee, gleefully. “I don’t think you’d like that.”

“go into the fire?”said Analees. “What is this, a Pentacostal revival meeting or something? Get converted, or go to hell?”

Lee giggled, again. “It would be just like in the before time. We all stand around with firebrands and jab you until you can’t stand any more. Then we roast you and eat you. Terri tells me she’d just love to eat you.”

“Oh shut up.”said Terri. Now her face flushed a bit. “Don’t worry. In New Huronia, no one has ever gone into the fire yet. Everyone chooses to be adopted once they find out more about us. C’mon. Eat up. “

Analees ate in silence for a moment, wolfing her food down.

When she had finished her breakfast, once again, she said : “Where is Larry Longboat? “

“I think he’s out hunting.”said Terri. “He is a great hunter. After all, he brought you to us, didn’t he?”

Lee giggled. “We saw it. He carried you in here draped over his shoulder. You were limp as a rag doll.”

“I always liked rag dolls.”said Terri, and she winked.

“They laid you out in the bed with us as guardian angels to look after you.”

Terri smiled and said: “Larry Longboat is also a great storyteller. He told everyone in this Longhouse about how he did it. Everything. Everyone knows how he gave you a magic potion to make you sleep, so he could bring you to us without a struggle, so he wouldn’t have to hurt you.”

“Magic potion? That was a damned date rape drug!”Analees’ voice was rising with anger : “How hateful! ...and to make it worse, even now his little white fishes are swimming around in the ocean of my belly. Yech.”

“Don’t worry.”said Terri. “He told me to promise you that he would lie with you again before too long.”

“He will, will he? That smug stud!”

“Relax.”said Terri. “Get used to the place.”

“Let us show you around.”said Lee. “You are going to be living with us. We are already being called ‘the three sisters’. Terri here, she is Sister Corn. I am Little Bean. And you, Nurse Cleef, you are Sister Squash.”

Terri added proudly : “Those plants were the mainstay of the people in the time before time, the three sisters who sustained them through the harsh, cold moon of the Long Snows. The Three Sisters grew together on the farms of old, the corn, the bean, and the squash. That means we have very honored names.”

”Ugh. ‘Sister Squash’?”said Analees.

“Don’t underestimate squashes.”said Terri. “You know, Pumpkins are squashes, and you can do all sorts of things with pumpkins, like making pumpkin pie, or carving scary Jackolanterns.”

Analees spluttered : “So now I’m the Great Pumpkin!”

Terri helped her up to her feet on the floor beside their private quarters. and hugged her warmly : “You’ll make a wonderful ‘Great Pumpkin.’”

Lee also stood up, and said to Terri : “C’mon, let’s show her around the Longhouse.”

Terri gestured down the hall : “This is our common area. The design is based on the ancient Iroquois Longhouse. “

She pointed to the simulated fires : “We even have small fires in the middle of the room, just like in the time before there was time. Only now, our fires are electrical in origin, so it doesn’t fill our Longhouses with smoke. You know, early Jesuit missionaries said the smoke made the Longhouses look like the people were in hell. Maybe it did. But in those days, the people all worked together and they helped each other, and they didn’t let nobody starve or freeze to death, so it was really more like Heaven than your old ‘straight’ world is.”

She pointed to the sides of the hall : “Our sleeping quarters all have privacy. All you have to do is close your flap. The you’ve got your own little apartment.”

“Isn’t the fire pretty.”said Lee, innocently. “I’ve always liked fire.”

“We’ll be sharing the compartment.”said Terri. “See, here...our stuff is stored above our bunks.”She lifted a flap above their compartment. “See, we’ve got some of our things stored there already. In the old days, that was all the people needed. But now, some folks have more things, so we’ve got a separate storage area, too. “

Analees looked up and saw a wire mesh. She saw that some of her own things were there as well.

“There is also a storage area below the bed.”said Terri. “We don’t waste any space here. It’s sort of like a space ship that way.”

“I see some of my things there, can I get something?”

“Not if you’re looking for a skirt or something like that. You have to stay like you are until the Council of Matrons decides that you can wear clothes on your bottoms. It’s sort of like when you put new patients in pajamas until they settle down. Here, you walk around naked from the waste down until you settle down. You learn to be less modest, and the guys can all get a good look at you.”

Analees’ face flushed bright red again. There was a long, awkward silence, then she asked : “Where is the bathroom?”

“Come.”said Terri, placing her arm around Analées’ shoulder like a mother duck. “This way.”

As they walked along, Analées could see different masks hung on the walls, hideous, distorted masks, like Jackolanterns, only they were painted black and red.

Lee noticed her looking and quipped : “Just like men from outer space!”

Terri frowned at her and said : “Those are the masks of the False Face Society that gave us medicine in the time before time. The First ever False Face was Longnose, and it was he that brought the magic ways of the False Faces to us.”

“I still think they were little men from outer space.”said Lee. “When you learn more about them, Nurse Cleef, you’ll see. You’ll see.”

Chapter Nine : “Strange Ceremony”

The some - time Janitor stood, tall and grim and dignified, like the lay reader In a fundamentalist church. He now wore an Iroquois False Face Society mask. The right half of the face was midnight black, the left half was bright red, like arterial blood. His words rang out to the small congregation gathered ‘round him. His voice was deep and strong and filled with intense emotion.

“This is the recitation of our ancestors, passed down to us for two hundred years. Honor be to those who spoke before me, their words alone preserved our people’s memory. As it always was before. Hear, then, the story. It takes place in days of long long ago.”

Terri hugged Little Lee as the girls listened, enthralled. This was their first time at THE CEREMONY OF AGES, celebrated by the nation that they had just joined.

Analees was with them. She was less than enthralled. She recognized Larry Longboat, and she just glared daggers at him. Somehow, some way, she would get even for that date rape pill. Hell, she didn’t even know what fun she’d missed. That’s what really pissed her off! What she remembered before that had been REAL NICE! Then everything went blank. Now, she would have to get even. There is nothing more insulting that giving a date rape pill to a willing woman.

She wondered what Xena’s Amazons would do to a man who did that to one of them.

The three women were hemmed in by others in the congregation. The two girls wore plain black dresses. Analees was still partially dressed in her leather vest and her suede boots, and nothing on her bottom. She supposed that being paraded around like that was part of her indoctrination.

The False Face speaker at the front of the room continued with his story :

“It is the harvest time. A party of Indians go down in canoes. They plan to hunt throughout the autumn and winter seasons. Soon, the orange and yellow and red leaves all fall and are covered with the white snows of winter. The season passes. Finally, the ice melts, opening up the stream. The men now travel down to the white man’s trading post at Pittsburgh. There, they barter their skins, dried meat and fresh game for strong drink.

Now all the hunting party become filled with strong drink. They yell and sing like madmen. They return to their villages. The men are very quarrelsome. All have weapons. Their families are scared and go hide in the woods. Now there is no one in the village except for the drunken men.

Many die before the drink runs out.

All the while, from many places in the bushlands around the village, camp fires send up their smoke to the Heavens, as people said their prayers in the way they did back then, by lighting fires.

Then things return to normal. The dead are buried. Life goes on. The next hunting season comes, and the story is repeated, and still the prayers go up to the silent skies above. That is the way it was in those days.

Terri hugged Little Lee again. The False Face paused for effect, then continued with his story :

In the village, a man becomes sick. He is bed-ridden. He feels the icy fingers of death grip his spine. He lies, bathed in the sweat of his illness, on a cot in the Longhouse. He wishes that he might rise again and walk upon the earth. He fears that he will not. He prays.

He has strong drink with him, hidden from the others. He knows that his sickness has come because of the strong drink, but still he craves it.

He lies on his back. He feels like he is lying on a bed of red hot coals. Still, silver icicles scratch his spine. He looks up through the thin smoke hole in the ceiling above him. He sees the stars. It is summer now. Others are all outside, enjoying the soft evening breeze. They feel the Creator's Breath blowing on them.

The man fears that he will not see the sun rise again. He prays. His prayers are like the smoke of the camp fires. They do indeed go up to Heaven.

At night, his breath comes heavy. All around him, he sees others lying at peace while their souls travel in the land of dreams. He fears that if he sleeps, he will not wake up. Above all, he feels that he has yet to do something, something he has not yet done. Something is yet to come. What has he done with the gift of life, anyway?

At last, he sleeps. In the morning, the people of the Longhouse think he is dead. They begin to dress him for burial. Then he stirs. He rises, and he tells them his story."

Now another voice speaks out in the congregation. The figure wears a mask as well, the bloated and haggard face of a drunkard. White wisps of corn husk surround the mask, like a halo around the sun. It is a woman's voice that speaks a man's words, as all share in the ritual. She spoke out loud and clear :

"I saw three runners coming across a pale green field. They were tall and straight, like sunflowers. Their faces were painted yellow, like the sun. They greeted me with a sign of peace. They spoke."

From a corner of the room, a chorus joined in, reading the words of the spirits :

"Handsome Lake, we know you even though you don't know us. We have been sent to you. Hear what we have to say. But first, look upon that grave."

The woman who was playing the role of Handsome Lake read Out: "And I saw a grave neglected and overgrown with weeds. The name on the tombstone had been worn away by the weather."

The chorus of the spirits spoke on :

"This is not the only visit we have made. In that grave, a man is buried. A great message is buried with him. We asked that man to give the message to the world, but he would not do so. He was afraid people would mock him as they make fun of a drunk. So now he lies there, forgotten. Handsome Lake, will you be our voice in the world of men? "

The actress playing Handsome Lake cleared her throat nervously, and read : "I will, if only I can walk again in the world of men with the sun's warm hand upon my neck. "

Now the False Face who began it all continued with the story : "And so they set out together, walking in another world. Handsome Lake wondered if this was the land of dreams, or was it something else? Then the messengers showed him the house of the Punisher, where the wealthy and the wicked go. And they showed him the lands of the Creator, a garden where there are always large ripe strawberries.

They continued on. They met a man with two small children. Handsome Lake recognized his young niece. The other child was a cousin. Both had died last spring when the streams were high. The children hugged him. The spirits spoke .

Again, the Chorus read their part : "We brought your children so you would know. There is a life hereafter. Now look on that hill over there. You see a lovely house. It is your mother's house. She is there, waiting. She mourns for you in your sickness, but if you go to comfort her now, you cannot go back to your people.

Please don't go. Your people need you to walk on earth again. Speak the message that we give you. You are not the first. You will not be the last. But you are our voice for now. We

bring to you the message of the Creator. ”

“I will do as you ask! “said the female voice of Handsome Lake.

False Face spoke : “Now a man in white raiment strode towards them. His pale face was as calm as that of a baby who is sleeping. His hair was as red as the soil of Earthly gardens sometimes is. He greeted them with a sign of peace. ”

Now the Chorus spoke again : “Handsome Lake, you are a chief. The people think you are one who can talk with spirits. I am the Spirit of one who was murdered. I lived across the sea. My own people murdered me. I told them of sharing the bounty of the world, just like your own people used to do. But soon after I died, they forgot that part. Instead, they sought the way of the wealthy and those who want to be rich. Go tell your people they will become lost when they follow the ways of the white men.”

And False Face spoke once more :

“The Fourth Messenger stretched out his hands in friendship. They bled from wounds in the palms. And Handsome Lake knew who the fourth Man was.

Handsome Lake recovered from his illness. He became a Messenger to his people. And the years of his prophecy were sixteen, and then he joined his mother in peace. Before he left us, he said that another Prophet could follow him.

Years of hardship followed. Bitter tears were shed. For awhile, God was as silent as a snowfall. Now a NEW VOICE has arisen. This is the time of the Second Prophecy of Handsome Lake. Listen well.”

Now the preacher came to the pulpit that was set up at one end of the room, rising up from the congregation. The others all sat on the floor or on benches.

He was big, bald, broad shouldered and muscular. He did not wear a mask. His dark and weathered face was strong but lined with care. The preacher wore a long robe like a judge, only it was burgundy, not black. His dark eyes flashed with the light of some inner conviction. His voice was like rolling thunder :

“I am the reincarnation of Handsome Lake. I am the New Voice of which he spoke.“

He smiled and leaned against the pulpit, looking quite casual.

“You might say that I’m God’s ghetto blaster.“

The atmosphere in the room became noticeably more relaxed.

His voice was quiet, now, reflective as he went on. His eyes had a far away look to them.

“One day, when I was young, I wandered alone through a field of corn, long long ago, in my other life.

A young woman came from nowhere. Slim she was, and pale with long yellow hair. She threw her arms around my neck. She held me tight. She whispered like the autumn wind :

‘ When you leave the earth for the place above, take me with you.’ “

Lee squeezed Terri’s hand and whispered : “It’s the corn maiden kid. That’s you.“

Terri squeezed back.

The preacher continued : “I closed my eyes and when I opened them I saw only long leaves of corn turning ‘round my shoulders. Then I understood. It was the spirit of the corn who had spoken. I told her that she must stay here on earth and be faithful to her purpose. Man must fill the belly as well as the mind. So the corn spirit has stayed through the years and lived with her sisters the bean and the squash.“

”That’s me, too! “said Lee. “You call me little bean. “

”That’s why. “

”But who is our sister squash? “

”Nurse Cleef, here, of course. She looks like a squash. “

The two girls giggled at their private joke. They drew dirty looks from others in the room.

“Welcome, newcomers, welcome.” Handsome Lake continued with his sermon :

“Fear not, my new friends, for here there is neither wealth nor welfare, for both are unearned. So we have left them both behind.

We also have no taxes, and no pensions. We share alike, just as our Iroquois ancestors did so many years ago, just as the early Christians did.

Yes, yes, the early Christians shared their things just like we do here. It is right there in their Bible. Indeed, Acts 1: 1-11 tells the story of Ananias and his wife, who were struck down because they held things back from their community. We have several different versions of their Bible in our library. Go check it out for yourself! And beware! The same thing could happen to you if you hold back from this, your community !

The white man has lost the message of Jesus, but I have brought it back from the land of the dead to share with you. It is a whole new way of life I’m talking about, a whole new way of life.

Yes, yes, I too have walked in the ways of the white devils. Even in this lifetime, I have been in the alleys of alcoholic death. Those ways are not for us. Come ye out from among the White Devils and be ye separate.

Know my people, that the land will always support you if you support it, but woe unto him that speculates in land. Or in money. For that is gambling. If you depend on that, you live in a house built on shifting Sand. How long will it stand?

He backed off, and looked away. His eyes reflected some inner vision. His voice was again like thunder :

“Children, oh my children, I have seen that the earth itself is alive. We, we are like red blood corpuscles helping to give it life, just as it gives us life. We are also like the white corpuscles that will defend it. We must be careful, for there are white worms eating out its belly. They do not see that if the body dies, its parasites will also die.”

We must make a strong medicine for the planet to cure the body of those white worms. The messengers of God have told me. That day is coming soon. That is all for now.”

Handsome Lake was silent for a moment, and then looked out over his audience. He said :

“Creator, thank you for the crops that feed us, and for the Three Sisters who now live among us in human and symbolic form.”

He walked out into the congregation, and stood in front of Terri, and said :

“The Voices of the Two Spirits have spoken, and given you the name of Corn Maiden. Welcome to your new Nation.”

He hugged her, and kissed her cheek.

He stood by Lee, and said :

“The Two Spirits have given you the name ‘Little Bean’.”

He hugged her, and kissed her cheek.

He stood in front of Analees :

“You are the newest one. The two Spirits have honored you with the name of Sister Squash.” He hugged her, then slid his hands down to feel her bottom, and added : “Like the ripe pumpkin, you are full and round.”

Her face blushed bright red. He kissed her on the lips, and was kind of sloppy about it, too.

Then he stood back, and said to all : “Welcome the new members of our family. Each is an orphan in her own way, but now they have come home.”

He strode back to the front of the room, and resumed his chanting there :

“Creator, thank you for freeing us from the ways of the white man. Thank you for our new vision of caring and sharing, and for our Great Tree of Peace. Let all people shelter in its shade someday, even as we ourselves do now. Let all people, everywhere, come to know Your Love, and caring, and sharing.”

Analees’ mind wandered. So this was their Great Leader, eh? From the way he’d just felt her glutes, this Prophet was not celibate. She wondered what his great white worm would look like.

Handsome Lake continued :

“Oh Great Spirit, whose voice we hear in the winds, your breath gives life to all the world. Help us to breathe as you breathe, to move as you move, as if we were your shadows. Let our eyes behold the red and purple sunset, and let our breath travel to where the sea meets the sky and then let it come back to us, still bathed in red and purple light.”

Hearing this strange and majestic man, Analees remembered her own experiences sitting on the old lifeguard tower at Larry Longboat’s cottage. Her spirit had flown to where the Lake and the Sky met, riding on her breath. It had come back to her, and it had seemed to be painted in hues of purple and red.

She now felt that this man, this Handsome Lake, must be a kindred spirit. He had seen what she had seen, had been where she had been. Her heart began to pound, and she felt waves of energy flowing through her torso.

Handsome Lake continued :

“Thank you for making my hands respect the things that you have made, and letting my ears be sharp to hear your voice, though it be as faint as the wind whispering in the trees. Thank you for hearing our prayer.

Thank you for letting us learn the lessons that You have written on every rock, in every tree.

Creator, help us to walk in your ways. Help us to overcome our problems, so that our victories may inspire others, those that we seek to help. Let us show them Your Way, by the way we act on the coming day. “

He looked at the congregation, and said, solemnly : Come, let us pray .“

The congregation formed a circle. They held hands, and bowed their heads. The room was electric with emotion as they spoke in unison. The newest members of the family listened :

“Creator, we seek Your Power, not to be better than our brothers and sisters, but to fight with our greatest enemy, the demon within. Help us to overcome our own inner Devils. And when life fades like the setting sun, let us come to you, riding on the twilight wind.”

Handsome Lake strode from the room, and the ceremony was over.

Chapter Ten: "Baptism"

"You, our newest sister, are like the Great Squash of the autumn, the Pumpkin that brings the winter in."

"Oh, wow" said Analees. "Now I'm the Great Pumpkin!"

"And ripe for the harvest." There was a mischievous glint Handsome Lake's eye. "I can tell by the color in your cheeks."

Terri looked down into Analees' eyes: "Yes, you are my sister now. I will look after you."

Then Lee tugged on her arm and looked up into her eyes:

"You are my sister, too. And I'll watch out for you. It will be like we were planted together. You'll see."

Her eyes shone with a strange light in them.

The girls followed Handsome Lake around the village, walking slowly, single-file behind him. Lee went first, then Analees, with tall Terri bringing up the rear. Nurse Cleef could see that, sister or no sister, she was still sort of a prisoner.

The group passed through a palisade of wood, walking back and forth through a maze.

Terri spoke, matter of fact: "In the days before time, our enemies who attacked us would become confused in these mazes of ours. Now, we still use the magic maze to honor their memory."

As they passed through the maze, it seemed to Analees as if time itself were unraveling in her mind. Outside the village, they saw the fields where the women did the work of farming.

"It won't be so bad. You'll get in great physical condition." Said Terri to Analees. "You will see."

They returned to the village. From the outside you could see that it consisted of a series of large, cylindrical metallic buildings. They approached one of them.

Terri yelled out: "Welcome to the twenty-first century Longhouse."

Lee let out a war whoop. Terri joined in. She prodded Analees' side with her foot.

"You, too, sister Squash. Whoop it up!"

Lee shouted: "Aii EEEE OHHH!"

The best Analees could master was a faint, half-hearted

"WHOOOO! WHOOOO!"

"You'll soon sing better, sister!" shouted Lee.

"We'll put some war-whoop in you!"

Terri giggled as her foot did some more prodding: "Sister Squash, you are now part of the Longhouse. Welcome to your new home."

They approached the building. An automatic door slid open, seemingly from nowhere. They entered.

A long hall lay ahead of them, lit by pale blue fluorescent light. The door closed behind them.

Analees thought of how this looked more like a space-ship than any Longhouse ever read about.

They walked along the hall. On the walls to the side, there were etchings of old Indian trail signs -- fish and birds and beaver and so on. Trail signs were etched in a silver that shone out from the pale blue walls. It was a futuristic revival of a prehistoric past.

Handsome Lake stopped where a tree was represented. He put out his left hand and touched the tree. The wall opened. He stepped through.

Analees went to follow. Lee blocked her.

“No. Not you. He is going to his rooms. WE go to another place.”

Lee now took the lead, as if in accord with some pre-arranged plan. The three women moved along the hall until they came to an etching of a waterfall on their right. Lee put out her right hand. The wall opened. They entered.

The room they were now in looked like a change room, stocked with pale gray lockers, tan colored benches, and a dark reddish brown rubber mat on the floor.

Terri opened a locker and handed Analees a navy blue one-piece bathing suit. It was still damp from its last use.

“Here. This will do.” She said.

Lee laughed: “Navy blue! That’s a good color for a squash, eh, Terri? “

Terri leaned back playfully, raised one of her long legs and tapped Analees’ cheek with her foot: “Come on, Nurse Cleef. We’ll baptize you with a swim. It will cool you off, too.”

Analees was starting to feel a little dizzy.

“Come on, we’ll help you change.” said Lee.

The two girls grabbed at Analees’ leather top and soon pulled it off to reveal that the nurse had not been wearing a bra.

“No bra! Wow, Terri, our nurse is into fem lib! “

“Nurse Cleef’s tits can get sweaty enough without one!”

Analees could hardly believe that she had said that. The girls giggled.

“Now the boots!” Lee knelt down. “How did that real old song go?

She began to sing: “These boots are made for walking, that’s what they’re gonna do...”

One boot came off.

She continued singing.

The other boot came off and landed with a thud in a corner.

She stopped singing.

“Now for her socks.” Lee giggled again.

The girls took Analees socks off.

Analees just stood there. Her feet felt cold on the floor. She was handed the navy blue bathing suit.

Lee stood straight up and looked her new sister right in the eyes. With mock solemnity, she said: “Do your sweaty toes squish better when you’re barefoot in your boots?”

“Damn you !”

“Awww, come on Nurse Cleef. We were just having a little fun with you. The way sisters sometimes clown around.”

“Yes, Nurse Cleef.” said Terri. “We’ll behave.”

“Hey, Terri. She really is a blonde! “

“So far. “Both girls giggled at some private joke. Then Terri ordered Analees: “Get into your bathing suit. We’re going swimming.”

The bathing suit felt cold and clammy as she pulled it on. Again, Nurse Cleef was feeling dizzy. Everything was like looking through a veil of some sort. Her ears felt plugged as if she was under water.

The two girls quickly changed. Terri wore yellow, Lee wore green, to be like the corn and the bean. The two girls then gave each other high-fives. Analees followed them out of the room.

In the next room, a long swimming pool lay before them. The water looked turquoise green because of the color of the bottom of the pool. The room was deserted except for the three

women. The others grabbed Analees' arms and threw her in.

The water was a cold shock. The small of her back felt cold, as if a block of ice had been laid in the middle of the sun. It made her back feel dark.

She stood in the water. She saw her new sisters standing by the side of the pool, smiling down at her. They jumped in after her and the pool belched forth a spray like a Great Sperm Whale blowing. Again, there were war whoops. The girls danced around Analees, playfully.

"Come on, sister squash" said Terri. "You're all sweaty, so we'll swim you clean."

The girls grabbed her arms and got her down and towed her on her back, face up. They spun her round and round in a circle. Analees looked up and saw the rounded ceiling arch above her. It opened, like a great dome. A figure appeared, floating in the sky.

The figure's long purple robes stood out from the turquoise blue and pink sky. He floated on long white feathered wings. He wore chief's feathers. His strong face was carved from red granite. With his right hand, he made the sixties sign of peace.

Analees closed her eyes briefly.

"No. This is not happening. It's just a dream!"

She imagined that she was back at her home. If she opened her eyes, she'd be back in her own bedroom.

She opened her eyes. The giant spirit of the chief was gone, but the ceiling still remained. She was still in the swimming pool. Wild war whoops were all around, echoing everywhere.

"It isn't a dream. It's real."

"Of course it's real." said Lee.

"Dreams are real, too." Terri added. "And before we're done, we'll prove it to you."

The girls now took Analees by each arm and led her back to the change room, still dripping wet. Then they began to take her bathing suit off of her, slowly.

Lee quipped: "Hey, it's just like peeling a banana."

Terri's voice was mock reproachful: "Ever see a blue banana?"

"Only when they are rotten. Then we throw them in the garbage."

Analees' stomach gurgled nervously.

"Uh, it's been awhile since I've eaten, girls."

"Oh, we can take care of that all right, can't we, Lee?"

Both girls giggled. Now Analees really felt uneasy. Terri scratched herself suggestively. "Just 'think about the old days, in the time before time began. All those strong women farmers in their tan yellow skirts. They were left alone for months while their men went on the war-path." Terri put her arm around Analees' shoulders. "Now, we do want to revive all the old traditions, don't we nurse Cleef?"

Terri stood back. She stood stiffly erect. Her voice was now serious.

"But first we've got other things to do. Look, we're sorry if we had a little fun with you. You are our sister now, and we now have to get you ready."

"Ready for what?"

"For your initiation."

Analees gulped hard. Somehow, that initiation business sounded ominous.

"I mean we have to help you clean up a bit." said Terri.

"Yeah...that's all. Clean you up a bit." Lee added quickly. "Now just stand still."

Terri got a bag out of one of the lockers and took out two small containers of red nail polish. The girls took Analees' hands and each did the fingernails on one hand. Analees

felt light-headed as the nails on her fingers turned a bright arterial red.

Next, the girls knelt and each did a set of toe nails. As she looked down at her feet, Analees' legs twitched slightly. The girls stood. Terri now applied a bright red lipstick to Analees' lips, holding her head when she flinched a bit.

"Now pucker up. There, that's better."

Analees looked up into Terri's eyes. Those eyes revealed amusement, as if she had a private joke all to herself. Then the nurse felt something cold between her legs. She jumped back.

Lee was kneeling in front of her, holding a can of shaving cream.

"Hey...what are you doing to me?"

Terri quickly seized Analees' wrists and held them with such strength that it paralyzed her. She glared into her prisoner's eyes :

"You know, you must become as a little child before you can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. This won't take long."

Lee continued to spray nurse Cleef's crotch with shaving cream. It tickled. It even felt kind of good.

"OH God!" Analees screamed as Lee pulled out a straight razor.

"You're not going to use that on me?"

"Calm down." Lee snarled. "Or would you rather lose the hair on your head?"

"For God's sake, be careful. My clitoris won't grow back."

"Now there's an idea. Hey, Terri...get this. Just a little slip of the hand and you can have this big ball-breaker slobbering all over your feet with those ruby lips. "

"Please don't mutilate me. "Tears welled up in her eyes."

"She wasn't going to, Sister Squash. Your companion for the night likes them clean-shaven, not mutilated."

Analees stood there, frozen. She stared down in disbelief as she was shaved clean. It scratched her skin a little, and she actually began to cry. And then it was done.

Terri smiled down at her. "Now, that wasn't so bad at all, was it?"

"You ever have that done to you ?"

"Yes. And I didn't cry like a baby the way you are."

Lee got a warm towel from somewhere and began to dry Analees off. Somehow, that, too, felt good. Terri relaxed her grip. Her voice was softer, now. Almost comforting.

"Look, tonight you are to become one of us. That means that our Leader has to welcome you tonight. It's called the rite of the first Night."

"To make you one of us."

"And he likes 'peaches'. He says that shaving your crotch makes all women equal."

"Hey, wait a minute."

Terri reached into another locker and brought out a beautiful yellow satin robe.

"Here, wear this."

Lee smiled : "Yellow is the color for girls here, yellow like my corn maiden."

She patted Terri on the bottom as if she was a football player, and just beamed with pride in her big friend.

"That's because women grew the golden corn that fed the ancient Iroquois in the time before time. It was the corn that gave us life. Just as woman gives life."

Terri laughed: "Like, in your world it's pink for girls and blue for boys. Here, it's yellow for girls, and red for men. Like red war paint or the blood of battle. There's nothing

corny about those colors.”

They helped Analees into the gown. She pulled it closed, modestly.

Terri placed her hand on Analees’ shoulder

“Think of it like being initiated into a sorority. Like your a rich American college girl joining a sorority.

“Hey, look...”

Analees’ voice betrayed her nervousness.

“Like I was never any good with men. “

“We might have guessed. “Lee sneered. “The big bad ball-breaker. Underneath, you’re more scared of them than they are of you.”

Analees sat down on a bench, crushed.

“Yeah. You got it right.”

“You got it on good with Larry Longboat. “

“He is different. And look what he did to me, giving a date rape drug to a willing woman. You know, I am usually sort of, well, cold.”

Lee’s shrill voice was filled with mockery: “She means she’s frigid. “

“Cut it out, Lee. Can’t you see she’s scared stiff? Remember how you felt lying in that corn field?”

Lee walked off and looked away for a moment. She turned back to Terri. “I see.”

Terri put her arm around Analees again. “Maybe you’ll just have to fake it. Your generation of women knows all about that.”

“Well, I don’t. I don’t think it was part of the curriculum in nursing school.”

“You want to join us, don’t you? “Terri stood up. “Think of the alternative.”

Lee knelt before Analees. This time, she was sincere:

“Look, he’s an old man. We love him. He’s all we got in the world. Please let him think you enjoyed it. We think he really likes you. It would mean a lot to him.”

Analees sighed with resignation: “OK. Do I get lunch first?”

“Yes.”said Terri. “And a day to sleep as well. We can’t have you falling asleep in the middle of the rite of the first night, now can we? “

Chapter Eleven : “The Talking Walking Stick”

Analees lay on the bed, dressed in her shiny yellow robe. It was a large bed with pale yellow sheets - soft, silk sheets. Her own robe, also silk, was a brighter, more intense yellow. She wore yellow gold sandals. Taped flute music lilted lightly in the background, some sort of primeval flute. She waited.

Handsome Lake entered the room. He wore a crimson robe, and nothing else. He walked slowly, as if in a trance. He used a long wood cane with strange marks carved on it. Still, his muscular body was impressive, and his shaved bald head somehow gave him an aura of great strength.

He sat down beside her. She looked up into his piercing black eyes, eyes as black as hell itself, she thought. The effect, together with his emotional intensity, was overwhelming. A force seemed to emanate from him. Analees could not see his face for his eyes.

“I’m glad you’ve come.” His voice was soft and gentle. “Welcome to my chambers.” He smiled. That sort of broke the reverie she had fallen into.

She now noticed the cane he held in his right hand. It was beautiful, all reddish brown and tan. It was about three feet long and looked like some sort of ceremonial sword from another age. At the handle, there was a miniature red False Face mask. Along the sides of the cane, strange designs were carved.

“Hello, Analees, my child. Relax. “

“I’m not used to men.” She reached out and felt the cane. “That cane of yours has a strange design.”

“It is a special memory cane. It talks to me. It is talking to me now.”

“Talking to you?”

“Here.” He placed her fingers on the top of one side of the cane.

“Here. I’ll show you how my cane can talk to me.”

“The cane feels bumpy.”

“Every bump on the cane has a meaning. This is how we recorded our history before the white man came. Feel this.”

“What is it?”

“A - a little man?”

“What is he doing?”

“Sitting? With his head in his hands?”

“This is our great chief Hiawatha.”

“Hiawatha? You mean like in the poem?”

“No. Not like in the poem. In days long gone, Hiawatha was neither myth nor poem, but flesh and blood.”

“What is he doing?”

“Crying. He is seated, grieving over the death of his only living daughter. It was Atarho, the black raven, the wizard, that slew her.”

“That is in that bump?”

“The seed of all of that that is in our minds. The bump on the cane of ages waters that seed helping it to grow until it flowers into thought. “

“You mean it jogs your memory. “

“Uh, yes. “

There was silence for a moment, then Handsome Lake went on.

“Many things were recorded that way in the old days. Here, Hiawatha bemoans his fate: ‘All my family have been taken from me by war.’ He says. He is utterly alone now.”

“I know what that is like, loneliness.”

“So do I.”

Handsome Lake moved her fingers along the cane.

“What’s this I feel now...a hill?”

“A mountain?”

“Yes, I can feel it now. It is a mountain.”

“It is Onandaga mountain. Hiawatha passed it on his way south to the lands of his enemy. Here...”He moved her hand further down. “Feel this. It is a great lake. In this great lake Hiawatha found sea shells and used them to make the first wampum belt.”

“Wampum? You mean like, money?”

“No. Like history books. Wampum was history books and law books too. It was peace offerings. It recorded peace treaties. But all the white man knows is money. So that is all he sees in wampum.”

“Then teach me what it means.”

“I will. But now for the rest of the cane’s story. Do you see how the cane talks to me?”

“Yes, yes, I do.”She gushed, shyly.

“Now what is this?”

“A barn? a house?”

“It is a Longhouse. At long last, Hiawatha came upon a Longhouse. There he takes council with the local chiefs. They tell him more about Atarho. That wizard is truly terrible. His headdress is made up of writhing snakes. They grow from his scalp. ‘Atarho is not human’, the chiefs tell Hiawatha. ‘Atarho is a demon.’

“This next thing, these three round holes, that’s what they feel like...”

“These are magic notes : ‘HI-Ye Hi!’ Hiawatha sang as he met the evil wizard. And he danced and sang magic songs before the wizard. Then the two made peace, and Hiawatha brushed the snakes away. It is not right that men should have snakes in their heads. After that, Atarho became a great leader of his people. Next, we come to?”

“A tree.”

“Then they made peace, a great tree of peace was planted. Now all can shelter in its shade. That is why we adopt others into our family. We let them share our ways. These ways were meant for all men. Now, in our New Nation, we have people and ideas from all over the world, all living together, all sharing, nobody hoarding. In our new world, no one starves and no one freezes.”

“Wow, that’s heavy.”

“Do you understand?”

“Do you see what it can mean for you?”

There was an awkward silence.

“Do you think...am I like that wizard?”asked Analees.

“If you think so. Maybe we can take the writhing snakes from your head. And put something else in it, instead.”

He squeezed her hand. She blurted out: “The other side? What does the other side of the cane say?”

"It is our story in modern times. The beginning of this village is on that side of the cane, told in ancient pictographs. That joins us to the past ways of life that we now continue. The ways of our grandfathers live on.

"My grandparents were all in Europe back then."

"You live on this land, don't you? The spirit of the lands is yours as well. Just as our grandfathers' flesh has returned to this soil, so their spirits are still abroad in this land." He paused and smiled, then went on: "Do not be afraid. The spirits do not wish you any harm. They only want to find life through you."

He leaned close to her. The smell that rode on his breath sweet was like strawberries in season. She moved back a bit. Her voice betrayed her nervousness: "Do the spirits speak to you?"

Back in the hospital, her patients often heard voices. But all that seemed far away now. And his rising loins were quite near to her. Somehow, she didn't mind that fact at all.

In my dreams the spirits do talk to me. They tell me many things. They have told me all about you." He squeezed her hand again.

Again, her voice was nervous: "What about the other side of the cane?"

He placed her fingers on the other side of the cane. His voice was just a whisper now: "The new village had its beginnings in the underground of my mind. Many moons ago."

He kissed her lightly on the lips. She leaned back involuntarily. He placed her fingers on the left side of the cane: "Here, feel this."

"It feels like - a leaf - no, a fire ... and a box. A fireplace?"

Handsome Lake leaned back: "I remember... years ago. My old fraternity house. Yes, believe it or not, I am an old fraternity boy. It was cold. November. Rain poured down outside. Rain...and mist. Inside, we had the fire blazing. It crackled with warmth. It was homecoming. It was a time of reunion. My fraternity brothers and I sat around with firelight

dancing in our whiskey glasses. There were eight of us...a doctor, a lawyer, some engineers and businessmen. Over the years, we had done many things and been many places. But we all agreed that everything we had seemed hollow. Something was missing. We agreed we would try to find what it was. The drunker we got, the stronger we felt about it.

We swore that if anyone found it, he must tell the others.

The next day, sober and hung over, we parted. It was too soon that we each went back on our own pathways. Too soon. Some of my brothers passed away before my visions started to come to me."

He moved her fingers. "Feel the next part of the cane."

"It's... it's a man. His hands are folded across his chest. He lies on his back, like he was laid out in a coffin."

"That is me. For years I had moved among the boardrooms of the nation like a vulture, living off carion. Then I lay ill, nearly dead. My kidneys burned like coals from hell. I was trembling...shivering with cold even under four blankets, even with the heat turned up. Even so, I was bathed in sweat. I was in and out of a blue-gray haze. Different faces flashed before me. Some were twisted, distorted. I wondered: "Is this where alcoholics go after death? Or suicides? Disembodied spirits seemed to float by me. Each looked lost, and so alone."

"I staggered about my house. I fell. At the bottom of an old bookcase in the basement, I found a book, covered with dust. It was a gift from a friend, so long unread. Something made me pick it up. I had forgotten who had given it to me. Book in hand, I staggered back to bed. Then, in a lucid moment, I began to read its yellow pages.

That yellowed paper had waited faithfully for me through all these years, until at last I was ready. It was the Code of Handsome Lake, the dreams of a long-dead Iroquois prophet.“

“You’ve taken his name?”

“I have taken up where he left off. My brothers and I and others all worked together. We drew in others. Here, on the cane. Feel this. Here’s Longnose, your friend from the hospital...here are others-,all our people, from all walks of life. Each did their part. We built our new village here, in the rough lands...so we could be private. We made the world all over again, caring and sharing like the Iroquois of old.“

Analees arched an eyebrow : “Are there any real Indians involved?”

“I see the snakes of cynicism crawling in your hair. I’m one eighth Mohawk. That is as much Indian blood as the Metis’ prophet Louis Riel had.“

“Wasn’t he supposed to be mad?”

“He called himself Louis David, but he was fighting a Goliath armed with Gatling guns. American Gatling guns. All he could do was to turn to God. Is that any more insane than the gin his arch-enemy John MacDonald guzzled all the time?

Analees blanched at the history lesson. Many Canadians have always been embarrassed by the drinking of Canada’s first prime Minister. Well, at least he wasn’t a slave owner...

“Yes, most of us have some white blood polluting our veins. But we also the blood of Ojibway, Delaware, Muncie, Sioux, Cree...Many others, too. You know, even in the days of the first Iroquois confederacy, the League adopted many peoples who were not Iroquois. Whites like Pierre Radisson were adopted, just as we are adopting you.”

“Are you going to keep on until your League includes everyone? That’s what you sound like.“

”Maybe someday our League...even more, our way of life, will include everyone. Already we have the blood of every continent among our peoples. Who knows what the future may bring? But now for our darker purpose...”

His fingers felt clammy cold as he fondled one of her bare breasts. She shuddered involuntarily. He rose and, without a word, went to a cupboard which he opened to reveal a small fridge. He got out a jar and a glass, He poured a dark red liquid into a glass and handed it to her.

“Here. This will help you relax.“

She took the glass in both hands and raised it to her lips. She hoped it wasn’t another date rape drug. She wanted to know what was happening to her. Besides, this could be fun. This fellow as almost as well hung as Larry Longboat. She sipped. It tasted like raspberries. She drank again, deeply. Again, and again, until the glass was empty.

He took the glass back from her.

“Well done.”He said.

He returned the glass to the fridge, and closed the cabinet. Once again, he sat down beside her. The fingers of one of his cold hands danced along the top of one of her legs. It felt like a big spider crawling right into her crotch.

The tentacles now roamed about inside her.

His voice was a breathless whisper : “Nice, lady...so nice.”

Just like a smooth peach...a smooth ripe peach.”

Analees whistled under her breath as his fingers crept on, exploring her. His sweet breath, coming heavy now, enveloped her. The haunting taste of raspberries was still in her mouth.

“Such a beautiful peach. Please...lie on your stomach...”

She did as she was told, afraid to think of what might come next. She never wanted to be that manly.

“Please...not up my bum...”

Don’t worry... .Don’t be scared. Please don’t be scared.”He sounded as if he was the one who was scared.

She gulped and said: “Please. I’m not scared. I do want it. But please, be gentle, gently. Oh, I’m not used to this sort of thing...”

“The potion should help. So should this. It’s an old acupuncture pressure point. You’ll see. We have things from all over the world here, like we were taking the best things on a new ark, like I’m Noah, eh? ...and the dark rain is the world’s economy, flooding everything from Moscow to New York.”

He began to rub her right leg gently. He squeezed it part way up the calf. Then he seemed to rub the point of one of his fingers into a certain spot. She began to tingle all over. It felt as if her whole body were blushing.

He took one of her legs and gently turned her over. She knew now what was coming. She was as eager to be taken over as a small Canadian company doing business with a US giant corporation. She relaxed. She just closed her eyes and let him in.

At last the rebel General entered the gates of the city; and the city was sacked.

Analees was far away from all that. In her mind, she was lying by the sea shore. She heard the call of the loon in the distance. It seemed to be flying away. Then all was silent, save the sound of waves rolling in and splashing on the beach. All was calm as the tide came in. Then she became a sea shell beneath the advancing waters.

She woke up part way through the night. He lay asleep beside her. His energies were spent. Her breath still came heavy, labored. She closed her eyes and slept again. She had a dream. Again, she was a sea shell. Now, she was being woven together with other sea shells. She became part of a fine mauve colored wampum belt.

Chapter Twelve : Business Meeting

At the front of the room was a stone statue of a native Iroquois woman bathing nude in a gushing fountain. Her graceful green gray figure and the water that fell over her gave the room a tranquil atmosphere.

“Hail, Our Earth Mother, Our Spirit of Sky Woman, Our Breath of Life!”

The Leader that the “Two Spirits” had named “Mother Mary Joy” stood in front of the flock of women with her back turned to them so that they all faced the same direction. She raised her arms and spread them out as if to hug the heavens. The others followed her lead. The group stood in a V formation, like a flight of Canada Geese. Analees stood at the back of the “flight”, flanked by Terri and Lee.

Analees was the newest “goose”. She glanced around the room. It all felt so strange here, but at least now she had a skirt wrapped ‘round her to give her some privacy. Like the others, she wore a long yellow skirt and knee high moccasins, the traditional summer costume of prehistoric Iroquois women. The only catch was that they were all topless.

“Well, Analees old girl” she reasoned “You’ve got nothing to be ashamed of up there anyway.”

In fact, she was still somewhat proud of her chest development.

“Nice and round and firm. Why, I can stuff a bra as well as two baby Pumpkins can.” Then she thought how many of the other women should use the pumpkins.

A couple of them looked so flat that she wondered if they really belonged there. These were the half - women that were known as “Two Spirits”. They were said to have a different vision of the world, and so their words were given great honor. In the White man’s world, they would be held in contempt, like anything else that was “different”.

Somehow, Analees didn’t mind being topless. It sure felt a lot better than being bottomless. She knew that it must be her cultural conditioning, but it’s still hard to escape that sort of thing.

Mother Mary Joy was a short slim native woman, with long white hair that trailed down her back. At seventy, she had kept her haunting beauty over a long and adventurous life that had led her to travel around the globe. On the island of Taiwan, she had become a Chi Kung Master. On the mainland of Canada, she had become a senior member of the matron’s council of this village.

Analees soon learned that the Matron’s Council governed all peaceful activities in the village, including such matters as marriage and medicine. Mother Mary Joy herself had told Analees that maybe, someday, she herself could sit on that Council. As a nurse, her views might be valuable.

In her heart, Analees wanted desperately to learn more about this fascinating woman of the world. She made up her mind to do so.

Mother Mary Joy spoke in a passionate voice : “Earth Mother, help us, your children, for we are weak. Give us the Breath of Creativity, the very celebration of femininity. Help us to ride the winds of change.”

She then led them through an ancient Shaman’s dance honoring “Our Sister, the Canada Goose.” The whole group used movements designed to mimic the lives of the geese.

Flights of flute music added to the graceful atmosphere. Flickering candle light painted the walls with a primeval look. Mother Mary Joy told them : “You are one with thousands of spirits

who have done this sacred dance in years long gone, down, down through the millennia to the very dawn of time.

The graceful group mimicked “flight over water” and “looking for food“. Analees followed as best she could. She was told to learn by watching and following, the way the cavemen did. Then the group did a graceful roll back as they folded their wings and looked over their shoulders at “our grandmother, the moon “. Then, they “looked for their nests”, and, finally, they squatted down holding their bellies, and “nested”. Analees began to feel a strange energy flowing through her. In their “nests”, they took three deep breaths. Then they rose and once again opened their arms to the sky.

Mother Mary Joy spoke again, her voice loud and forceful : “Walk in the ways of our Sisters the geese. See how they share leadership, even in flight, so that no one goose gets too tired. If a goose is hurt, two other geese drop down to help and stay nearby until the goose recovers or it dies. Great Earth Mother, grant us the wisdom and the strength of our sisters the geese!”

Mother Mary Joy gracefully lowered her arms to her sides. The whole group followed her lead. Then everyone stood still for a moment in silent meditation. Then she turned and smiled at the group, swinging her arms loosely.

“Welcome to our three newest sisters. The Two Spirits have named them after the three sisters who once fed our forebears. Here is Sister Corn!”

Terri raised her hand above her head. The women all applauded.

“And Sister Bean!”

Lee raised her hand the same way. Again, there was applause.

“and our newest sister, Sister Squash!”

Analees managed a weak wave of her hand and got more applause than the other two combined.

Mother Mary Joy smiled and said : “Now we can get on with our day.”

The strange “flight” broke up as the women went their different ways to get on with their differing days. They would meet again the next day, also at 6 a.m. Somehow, Analees felt herself looking forward to that.

Mother Mary Joy went over to Terri and whispered something into her ear. Terri turned to Analees and said: “Come with Lee and me. We’ve got a surprise for you.”

They led her from the room and along a series of metallic hallways painted with pre-historic people and animals. Analees tried to do a mental diagram of this complex, to get an overview of her surroundings. Several buildings seemed to be connected underground in a maze sort of like the palisades outside. The art work seemed to function like street names and numbers.

Instead of “Two hundred Broadway”, you would have “two maidens and a Sturgeon.” It was more colorful doing it their new way!

They entered a room marked with a goose. Terri punched in a code for a combination lock.

“This is our private place “said Lee.

It was a storage room filled with suit cases and green garbage bags and a big blue trunk that looked familiar.

“Uh, is that MY trunk?” asked Analees.

Terri smiled at her smugly and said : “Larry Longboat went to your place and brought you up a few more things.”

“Uh, thanks. I think. Looks like I’m really moving in up here.”

“Looks like.” Terri put her arm around Analees’ back and hugged her.

Little Lee joined in the hug. She blurted out : “Now you can wear any clothes you like, except for when you are dressing for ceremonies. The three big green garbage bags are also filled with your things, too. “

“That’s a lot of nerve.“

Lee leered at her : “Would you rather be naked again?“

“No. No, I wouldn’t. “

Terri pointed to other garbage bags around the room : “Some of the others came off the street. Those bags are all they had. You are very lucky! You had a lot more things. And Larry says you’ve got even more stuff to come. Lots more.“

Terri took Analees by the shoulders and looked into her eyes and said, solemnly: “They say that clothing makes the woman. Today you are to dress the role for a very important business meeting. We’ll wait.“

Gingerly, Analees went and opened the trunk.

Larry had brought more than just clothes. Analees didn’t know quite what to make of it. There was an old diary, from many years ago. And a scrapbook.

“Jesus! Had LARRY read those things?“

She picked up the old gray scrapbook that her mother had kept for her. Slowly, thoughtfully, she opened it. Yes, there was her picture as a nursing graduate, slim with sparkling eyes that had been filled with hope. Leafing back, there was a high school graduation photo, grim and severe.

She went on back through the scrapbook, like taking a trip back in time.

She smiled as she saw herself as the captain of the high school swim team, wearing a one piece royal blue swimsuit. In that photo, she was beaming with pride. The swim team had just won the provincial championships.

“Those were such happy days!”She said aloud. “Why do we have to grow up and lose it all?“

“Some of us don’t ‘grow up’.”said Terri.

“OK.”Analees snapped the scrapbook shut, “Business clothes! Right? “

“Can we look through your scrapbook?“asked Lee. “You’ve seen our scrapbooks.“

“Your scrapbooks?“

Lee smiled sadly: “Our hospital records. Those are our scrapbooks.“

Analees shrugged. “Yes, I guess they are. OK, now. Back to business clothes.“

She turned back to the trunk and rifled through it and eventually wound up wearing a shiny white blouse, black mid length skirt, navy blue pantyhose and shiny black high heels. That did seem to give her a business-like look.

She rubbed her hand along her leg. Smooth silk pantyhose did feel nice after a week without them. We do take so much for granted in our little lives.

She turned to the girls.

“Do I look business like?“

“You could be a most efficient secretary.”Said Terri. “I’d hire you for sure.”

Lee added : “You could also pass for a head nurse, if you wanted to do so.“

“Thanks. I thought I’d left that life behind me.“

Analees paused for a moment to wonder what her parents would say if they could see her now. Then she said : “OK, girls, let’s go do whatever business I’m supposed to do.“

The small group left their little private area. Terri slammed and clicked the door behind them. Analees could not help but notice that Terri had not given her the combination to the lock. If this really was her area, she’d have to ask others for permission to go there.

They passed along more rows of gray walls and prehistoric people and animals and fishes. They came to a door with an eagle on it that looked almost presidential or something.

Terri pushed some buttons and a door slid open and then she smiled and said : “Go on in. We’ll wait here for you.”

Analees stepped forward, into a large officious looking office. Before her stood an imposing desk that dominated the room. Above the desk, a gigantic wood eagle flew across the wall.

Larry Longboat sat with his feet on the desk. He was wearing a navy blue power suit with a matching tie. He stood to welcome her.

She walked over to him, a bit unsteady on her feet, trying to look formal. He came ‘round to the front of the desk to greet her.

“Should I shake his and after what he did to me?”She wondered.

Instead of offering her a handshake, he hugged her warmly.

“A hug? After giving a date rape pill to a willing woman?”She thought. Then she added in her thoughts: “Oh, to hell with being mad.”And she returned his hug.

It was a long and warm embrace, then he kissed her on the mouth, passionately, probingly, and just a little bit sloppily. It was just the way she liked it.

As their lips parted, he whispered to her: “We got some business to do. We can do this some more later.”

They separated and he showed her to a chair in front of the desk. Then he returned to his place behind the desk. As they sat there opposite each other, they could have been the typical businessman and his secretary.

Larry smiled and said : “In the other world, I am just a janitor, sweeping up the rubbish of the world. Even human rubbish can wind up in my garbage bin. But here, I am the director of recruitment.”

“The janitor? Head of recruitment?”Analees suppressed a little giggle at the thought. This must be some real crazy company.

“Take those girls that are with you. They are society’s garbage. Nobody wants them - except for Handsome Lake. And the Creator who sent His messengers to speak to him when he was lying in bed, dying of drink. In the name of Handsome Lake and the Creator, I have rescued those girls. And I have rescued you.”

“Thanks. I think.”

“For all your knowledge and skill, you were only garbage in that world, just as they were, only you didn’t know it.”

“Handsome Lake just initiated me.”Her face flushed red. “in his own special way.”

“I realize that. I wish he had not done so. But he is our Prophet, so we have to let him have his way. Damn, I wish he hadn’t taken you. I loved you. I still do. I want you for myself.”

She didn’t know what top say. She just blurted out : “Well, I guess...if he is your Prophet...”

“You know, I am special, too.”

“You ? Who are you the re-incarnation of?”

“Listen up. Lady, and I’ll tell you the legend of Longnose.

In the time before time, the Creator roamed the world alone. He came upon a stranger who also claimed to be the Creator. They say that maybe this was the shadow of the Creator. But anyway, they had a contest and the stranger’s nose was broken.

The stranger begged to be given a role with the new race of men that was being made back then. The Creator showed him mercy. The Stranger became Longnose, Father of all Medicine. Since the dawn of time, he has lurked beyond the rim of the world, seeking to help

the sick. It was he who sent the False Faces and their mighty medicine among the world of men.“

”And you are Longnose? “She said, with a smirk.

“I can feel it in my bones.“

”I like Larry Longboat better. He’s got good bones, too. “

They both laughed, and the atmosphere eased up a bit.

“So what’s in store for me now? “Asked Analees.

“Please come and join us. You are imaginative. I can see that from your reading material. Imaginative people are flexible folks. That’s why your old, inflexible job was getting to you. Longnose lives in your heart, because you really do want to help people.“

“I suppose that I do. I really did try to help Terri.“

“In our village we really need a good nurse, someone who knows the ways of white medicine and yet is still flexible.“

“Do you have a doctor?“

“We don’t need one. Not a white man’s doctor. Such men are greedy, and their lives are run by wives that are even more greedy. We do not need that sort of thing in our world of caring and sharing. Now, nurses are different. Nurses are much closer to the people that they seek to help. Doctors may prescribe treatments, but nurses carry them out. Did you ever see a doctor try to apply a bandage to someone?“

She laughed, because she had.

“Here, we have many spokes in our medicine wheel. We have a traditional medicine woman, and a Southern U. S. Folk touch healer, and, of course, we have a Chinese Chi Kung Master, as you know.“

“Mother Mary Joy.”

“You have met her, then?“

“She is one of the most fascinating women I have ever met.“

“How would you like to work with her, to learn from her? To help build a new world with her?“

“That sure doesn’t sound like the old hospital.“

“It isn’t.“

“Sounds sort of like being an explorer. ”

“You will explore internal worlds you had not dreamed of.“

“Cool. “

For just a split second, she felt like she was twenty again.

“I do love that imagination of yours, and I would live to share it with you if you will only let me do so.“

“So what do you need from me today? I don’t think my stay here is covered by Medicare.“

“We need your signature on some documents.“

“What for?“

“Your house. And your pension. We’ll keep your house for now as a ‘safe’ house for our people when they are traveling south.

If you assign the pension to our legal representative, the proceeds can help with our ‘special needs’.“

“What needs? I thought you had everything here.“

“We do. If it were not for the existence of the other society. Behind its shallow facade lurks the real evil, the secret world government. It is that hidden order that has brought about globalization. Handsome Lake used to be part of that picture, so he knows. And he has taught us.

If those people knew about our ways of caring and sharing, they would wish us all dead. We’re about as welcome in their world as a Tibetan nun in Beijing. So we have to be prepared to defend ourselves.”

“You are well hidden here.”

“Sooner or later, they will find us. They will root us up like magic mushrooms harvested from a forest floor. So we need weapons to defend ourselves. Look at the Chippewa at Ipperwash. Now they got guns, they get respect. The white man is like the school yard bully. Force is the only thing he understands.”

“So you need weapons?”

“Just as our village is much more advanced than the Chippewa at Ipperwash, so are our military needs. So we have started to build an arsenal.

Just look at the massacre at Waco Texas. Well, that won’t happen here. We’ve got anti-tank guns and even anti - aircraft rockets. But what we really need is some plutonium. We are buying that from a Russian General, but we need a lot of money to pay for it. “

“You’re going to build an atom bomb? “

“A whole fleet of them. We can smuggle them into white cities all over North America. Then they’ll have to show us respect. “

“You’re mad. All of you.”

“In the olden days, the white Americans came under General Sullivan and drove us from our lands. The American troops burned all our crops and left the people to starve to death. Imagine what would have happened if the Iroquois of old had had the atom bomb? Too bad we can’t go back in time and give them one, so we have to do the next best thing. Get the bomb ourselves.”

“At first you sounded so different. So peaceful “

“We are. We can still make a New Jerusalem that will outdo John Brown’s wildest dreams. But we will have to defend it. Look what happened to Tibet. In 1950, the Chinese Communists just walked in and took over. The whole country was a living cathedral, but it didn’t help them against Chinese tanks.”

“Does Handsome Lake know about all this ? “

“Some of it. He finds all violence to be distasteful. When we talk to him, he reminds us that his God cannot even look upon sin. Then he tells us to do what we must do. And he goes back to praying. He has not forbidden us to get these weapons. “

“That sounds sort of like Jonestown in Guyana. I saw a TV movies about that once. Their leader, the Reverend Jim Jones, started out with a lot of good ideas: caring and sharing and even civil rights. In the end he led his people to mass suicide. He also sampled the women in his church. Why don’t we just go off somewhere together and start over?”

“It’s not like that here, my sister. Here, we are different. We have no ruler, only a Prophet who we listen to sometimes. He himself admits that he can make mistakes. So for important things we all have to agree. And for everyday stuff, the Council of Matrons tells us what to do. Leaders like Mother Mary Joy.”

He took her hand and squeezed it.

“We are free. You can be, too. Trust me.”
to sign? “

“Give me a pen. Where do you want me

Chapter Thirteen: "School Days"

"Hee-Yaaaa!"

Analees yelled as she kicked the realistic target dummy in the crotch. Then she clapped her hands over the dummy's ears and drove a knee into its groin. She felt good, practicing to be a real life ball breaker. This was fun!

It was a nice combination she was learning, because it would enable her to nail a man twice in the groin before he fell to the ground. She smiled just thinking about it.

Every day everyone in the village spent some time in martial arts training. The New Handsome Lake had written: "Your arms are the Creators' arms, your legs are the Creator's legs. You must prepare to defend all Creation, with those, your empty hands, if necessary."

Many of his sayings had been collected in a little green book, and appeared and re-appeared in slogans written on the walls.

"Creativity is the best part of humanity."

"Walk in the Creator's footsteps."

"Glory be, to Creativity."

Catch phrases for a New Age Religion. A New Way rose like a new road built for a New Millennium. It was like Phoenix rising from the ashes of what the old bloods used to call, in hushed whispers, "the Old Religion". And the keys to the Kingdom were in the Little Green Book.

"Very Good, Sister Squash!" said Fann. "You're still mad at Larry Longboat, aren't you?" She laughed.

Analees just fumed: "Well, who ever heard of giving a date rape pill to a willing woman? I'll never even know what fun I missed!"

Fann patted her on the shoulder with sympathy. "There's a few nights from the old days that I can't remember either."

Fann was a dark haired Native Canadian woman, with flashing black eyes. In her dark evergreen jump suit, she looked so "lean and mean" that she could have been a Colonel in the Red Chinese army.

Terri and Lee both joined in the laughter. Both of them wore jump suits, too. Lee wore green. Terri, as always, wore yellow. Analées wore a navy blue one piece bathing suit, shiny navy blue short shorts, and running shoes. She was getting used to showing off her statuesque form, and was beginning to enjoy doing so. Navy blue seemed to highlight her nice "Vampire white" flesh.

Analees hated being called a squash. It seems that the "Two Spirits", strange people who were born as men and lived as women, were given the job of naming each new member because they had special spiritual insight, and because in the old days they had done so.

One of the "Two Spirits", named "Apple" for a protruding Adam's Apple, explained her new name to her. One of the "Two Spirits" had had a dream of "the Three Sisters", the three plants that had been the main staple of the Iroquois diet, just before the two teenage girls came to the village. So that meant that "the Three Sisters" were coming to live among the people. Then Larry had brought Analées to the village.

Since she was to be one of the Three Sisters and "bean" and "corn" were taken, that left "squash". So she had to be "Sister Squash."

All told, there were about a dozen women working out together on this day. Fann clapped her hands and they all gathered about her. This was indeed a martial arts class, though no one wore a ghi.

Black Belt Lee said that she missed having a ghi. In her old karate days, her ghi had made her feel safe.

Analees was also used to white uniforms from the “good old days” in the hospital, back when you could tell the patients from the staff. She felt she’d just as soon forget about uniforms, just as she’d like to forget a lot of her own past.

The upshot of it all was that most of the women preferred to dress their own way.

Now, Mother Mary Joy joined the group. She also wore dark evergreen, just like Fann. Fann bowed to her. She bowed to Fann. Then she spoke to the group.

“Now it is time for you to run the special obstacle course one again. Let’s see how much you’ve learned. Who wants to go first?”

“I do.” Said Terri, speaking out so strongly that no one dared to challenge her.

“Yay Tall Corn!” shouted Lee. “I’ll follow her!”

The rest of the group were given different numbered positions, with Analees winding up half way down the pack.

Now they moved from their gym to an adjoining room. This was a street scene set up sort of like those used by the FBI and other police departments, only it was far more versatile - and realistic.

There were three dimensional figures - fully dressed dummies - arranged to simulate a typical scene that one might encounter while walking down the street. The twenty - one dummies were both male and female, and there was even one “She Male”, just so that the “Two Spirits” would not feel neglected. The dummies all wore different clothing, just like you would see on the street.

Of all the figures, the ‘She Male’ stood out the most, dressed in a black minidress, platinum blonde hair, and shiny black high heels. It made Analees mad, wasting clothes like that on a dummy, even an anatomically correct “She Male” dummy! And it was those darned “Two Spirits” that named her “Sister Squash”. She was going to get even with that dummy!

She remembered how sometimes when she was younger she’d look at the mannequins in store windows all decked out in the latest fashions, and she’d be jealous of them, too.

The figures could be moved about. As Mother Mary Joy had warned them, the scene will never be quite the same each time you run the course. It was set up like an attack situation one might encounter on the street. The idea was to run the course so that you KO’d every figure with maximum impact in the minimum amount of time.

Terri stood at one end of the room, like someone about to start a race. Coolly, she surveyed the street scene as it was now set up. She said aloud a prayer of thanksgiving : “Thank you, My Creator, Light of the dawn and the dusk. Let me prove myself worthy of your trust.”

She took three slow, deep breaths. She nodded that she was ready.

At a silent signal from Fann, Terri let loose with a blood curdling war cry and leapt into action. She fairly flew around the room, striking the dummies with a variety of blows. Generously, she threw out knees and kicks and back kicks, side kicks, too. She grabbed clothes and used lots of heel palms and backfists. She hit groins and temples and even poked a few eyes for good measure.

As she ran the course, the others shouted out encouragement, and even repeated slogans they'd been taught.

"Crush the skull and squish the brain!"

"When the temple caves in, the service is over."

"Squish his hot tomatoes for him!"

Like a yellow whirlwind, she flew around the room. When she had given gifts to each and every dummy, she stood breathless before Fann and Mother Mary Joy.

"Very good." Said Fann, looking at her stop watch. "Three minutes, thirteen point seven seconds. But two of your targets would have lived, so there will be a penalty added to your time."

Terri looked downcast.

Mother Mary Joy added : "Still, you will probably have the best time. Congratulations. Some day you will be leading your own war party."

Terri's eyes lit up light sunlight, and she smiled sweetly. She spoke in a loud and breathless whisper : "When you're a blue eyed Mohawk, you have to live up to your blood !"

Fann said to Mother Mary Joy : "She's so good, she looks like she's done it all before."

"Maybe she has." Said the group mother. "Maybe she has."

Fann looked at Terri suspiciously: "Have you done this before?"

"No Aunt Fann. You know I just started learning with you. I have never done martial arts stuff before."

Mother Mary Joy said: "Not on this life. But I had a dream. In it I saw you in your last lifetime. You lived on another continent. You were a great warrior of the Shaolin Temple, a warrior nun."

There was a silence. All the students were learning how important dreams could be.

Aunt Fann broke the silence: "OK, Lee. Little Bean. It's your turn, now."

Lee ran the course, then others followed her.

Soon it was Analees' turn. She glared down the course at that "She Male" dummy. One of these days she was going to sneak in after hours and swipe that dress off of the dummy's back.

"YAAA - ARGH!" Inspired by the moment, Analees let go with a blood curdling war cry. She sprang forward. Things that had taken so long to learn in practice now became a blur in application as she whirled around the room. She even gave that "She Male" dummy an extra shot in the groin for good measure.

When everyone had run the course, they all milled around the room. The atmosphere was just buzzing with good vibrations. The three sisters hugged each other with all the joy of a team that had just won Olympic gold.

Fann addressed the group with a shrill drill sergeant voice:

" You have done well. Now, we will start on the hard part of the course. Sit down and listen up and Mother Mary Joy will tell you about what comes next."

The women all sat down, cross legged, in a circle.

Mother Mary Joy went into the center of the circle. She raised her hands, opening herself to the sky, and said in prayer:

“Creator, thank you for bringing us together. Thank you for the wisdom that I am about to share with my sisters. Help us to learn the sacred ways of ages long lost. Let the Spirits of those ages live again in us.”

She breathed in through her nose, then expelled her breath through her mouth as she lowered her arms.

She looked around at her students. Then she spoke again, this time to the group of girls gathered ‘round her :

“In the magic of the forest, we have many brothers and sisters. There are the Little People and the Flint Giants, and, of course, the big furry fellows that the white men call the Big Foot. In Tibet, these ones are called the Yeti. They live in China, also. They have many names around the world. They travel widely, for they have learned to live in their own world of shadow.

One day, one of our Medicine Women helped one of the Big Foot when he was injured. So the Big Foot taught her how to become invisible. We will teach you that as well, but you must promise not to tell outsiders.

There are magic ways of hunting, too. Entering the mind of the one that is hunted, you can use their dreams to attract them, even lure them into a trap. Like fire, the dream is a very versatile tool. You will learn to fly on wings of thought, and seek out your prey, traveling through the world of dreams.

You will learn all this, and more. But for now, think on this: ‘Where there is stillness, motion.’

That is enough for today.”

Mother Mary Joy motioned to the others and they all stood up. She led them into a slow smooth cool down. She mimicked different animals. First they became the bear, as strong as rock. Then, they became fierce like the wild cat and light like the fleet deer. At last, they moved into the flight of the wild goose, and their little dance was done.

Chapter Fourteen : First Raid

“We’ve hit the jackpot!” said Larry Longboat. Analees had just entered his office and sat down on his lap, as she usually did when it was time for his morning coffee break.

He was dressed down, as usual, wearing blue jeans and a red T - shirt with an eagle on it. She was dressed up, wearing a shiny silk robe over a black wet look bathing suit. She wore a gold necklace, and gold open toed sandals graced her feet. She was hoping to interest him, as she usually did. She never expected him to really talk about business anymore.

“That old friend of yours - Sally - could be a very important link for us. Her husband has many important contacts in the globalist business community. If we log onto him, we log onto them as well.”

As part of her intake when she joined the village, Analees had been asked to fill out a detailed list of acquaintances. It was an extensive list, just like the ones that fledgling insurance agents fill in for their new companies to develop a list of contacts. It took her hours to complete it. She came to realize that, over the years, she had got to know an amazing number of people.

All of this information was then fed into the computer systems of the New Iroquois Nation for the use of N.I.I. (New Iroquois Intelligence). Now it looked as if some of her information had proved to be valuable.

Sally Smythe-Whyte was an old friend of hers from a previous incarnation - her nursing school days, so long ago. They had once been room mates. Sally had married well and retired from nursing many years ago. Her husband, Winston Smythe-Whyte, had once been a senior civil servant. He had retired from government work and gone into business using his many government contacts. From then on, it was the great Canadian success story, wealth built on patronage and networking. As Sally had told her, “he played on the right golf courses.”

By now, he was like an octopus with tentacles in everything. He was even rumored to be part owner of the Octopus store near Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. He had truly earned the nickname his wife used for him behind his back: “old dough balls”.

Larry Longboat tickled her tits as he said: “Sister Squash, The Great Pumpkin is about to go on her first raid.”

“Raid?”

“What do you think all that training you’ve been doing is for?”

“Fitness?” She tried to look dumb as he continued to play with her breasts.

“It’s really an intelligence gathering mission. You call her up and go visit her. You carry some things into her house in your purse. Terri becomes invisible and slips in with you, as if she were your shadow. Then you keep Sally distracted while Terri deploys the intelligence gathering equipment hidden in your purse.

We’ll be able to look right into the heart of globalist big business.”

“I always wanted to play a role in a spy movie.”

“Well, now’s your chance to be a spy in real life.” He said, as he began to rub her belly. “You call her up and say you’ll be in Toronto for a few days. Could you drop in for a visit?”

“I just know she’ll say ‘yes’. We were once very close.”

He reached for the telephone and handed it to her.

Analees jabbed the buttons on the phone with blows that seemed to her to be like the self defense moves where you hit pressure points with a finger. She laughed to herself at the image.

“One - Four - One Six...”

“Hi Sally. This is Analees. Analees Van Cleef.”

“Oh. Uh. Hi, Analees. I haven’t heard from you in years.”

“I guess we sort of drifted apart. But you know, they say that old friendships are like antique wood, they gain value with age. But they do need to be polished up now and then. I miss the talks we used to have. Remember - about our dreams?”

“Most of mine came true.”

“And mine did not. No matter. We’re still friends, aren’t we?”

“Yes, yes. Of course. ‘Now and forever’ as we used to say.”

“I’m going to be in Toronto this week on my holidays. I wondered if I could drop in for a coffee and a talk about old times.”

“A trip down memory lane. I sort of like that.” said Sally. “I seldom give much thought to the good old days.”

And so they agreed that Analees would drop in the following Monday.

“Not too early.” said Sally. “These days I’m not an early riser.”

“Two o’clock?”

“O.K. That way you can be out of here before the rush hour.”

She hung up and Larry got one of her tits out of her bathing suit and began to play with the nipple. As she tried to keep a straight face, he said : “Now to take our coffee break.”

...

So now it was time to put up or shut up.

Analees was dressed for action in her business outfit: Crisp white blouse, black velvet skirt, black heels and navy blue pantyhose. She looked as deadly as a bank manager, and felt about as mean. If only Mata Hari, her heroine, could see her now.

“Look out, James Bond. Here I come!”

Terri was also dressed for business. She wore a black Ninja jump suit with matching turtleneck, and shiny black platform boots.

They smiled and waved at the others from the Longhouse who stood by to see them off, almost as if they were astronauts going into space. They got into their car. It was an old buick skylark, a remnant of the days when men were men and cars were cars and both had muscles. The engine roared like a monk at a Fraternity party and they were off to Toronto.

Morning turned to afternoon as trees turned into traffic. Just outside Toronto, they pulled into a gas station.

In the privacy afforded by a washroom, Analees watched Terri undress.

The one big problem with “wearing the grey cloak” of invisibility, becoming “one with the night”, is that in order to do so, you have to be naked. You can make your body disappear, but any clothes you wear will still be visible, so, for instance, the result could be that people would see a filled out bathing suit floating through the air. That might attract attention.

In Canada’s cold climate, being naked in midwinter would present some difficulty. It was at those times that other secrets of the old shamans came in useful. Like the hidden masters of the Himalayas, they could draw upon an inner source of heat, like an internal sun. Their secrets had been lost, until Handsome Lake had come back. He brought the secrets of the past with him. Analees had felt that internal sun when she was in training, so had Terri. Fortunately, it was now June, so they didn’t have to put it to the full winter test. Maybe next November...

Analees couldn’t help but smile. Her sister Tall Corn really took her new name seriously, for under the black clothes, she wore shiny yellow undies.

Terri looked so fit you could hug her. So now she hugged her friend, and gave her a “good luck” kiss on the cheek. Sometimes Analees was glad that society allows girls to hug each other.

“Don’t worry.” Terri said. “You won’t see me, but I’ll be there with you, just like I was your shadow.” Then she added, in a deep and ominous voice:

“You’re my sister now, and I’ll always be with you. No matter what may happen.”

Terri hugged Analees and gave her a good luck kiss on the cheek. Then she slipped out of her undies and handed them to her older friend saying: “Take good care of these.”

They placed Terri’s clothes in a green garbage bag. Then Terri did the incantation thing and the breathing thing and the mental thing and... Suddenly a strange electricity filled the air, like the sparks you sometimes feel when you pet a cat. A hazy lime green cloud enveloped Terri, and she just disappeared.

Analees carried the dark green garbage bag out to her car and tossed it into the back seat. She sat down at the driver’s seat. She could feel the invisible Terri sit down beside her.

“Hey!” She shouted as Terri playfully pinched her right tit. “Save the ‘rasslin’ practice for later!”

She could hear her ghostly friend giggle as they drove off.

It didn’t take long to find Sally’s place.

The mansion was surrounded by a high brick wall, almost like a prison would be. There were bars on the open gate that guarded the end of the driveway.

A crazy thought entered Analees’ mind, like a momentary flashback. She remembered a movie that she and Sally had seen together back in 1968, when they were both young and ambitious. It starred Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Both girls had wanted to be Elizabeth.

The movie was called “Dr. Faustus”, based on Christopher Marlowe’s play. There is a scene in the movie that now replayed itself in Analees’ mind. Faustus comes across a man in a cage counting money. He asks: “What kind of prison is this?”

The miser comments: “These bars are not to keep me in, but to keep thee out!”

Analees wondered, if she were a female Faustus, what she would want for her soul. Then a chill tingled up her spine. She realized that she was about to see what Sally had got for hers.

The driveway wound ‘round to the back of the house. It ended in a small parking lot. Analees could see a Lincoln Continental, two convertibles, a two - seater sports car, and a rusty old Dodge Shadow. She didn’t have to guess which car belonged to the maid.

Analees parked and got out of her car, taking her large purse with her. Beside her, Terri giggled. It was strange, hearing laughter that came from nowhere.

“I feel just like Santa Clause!” she said. “A Summer Santa. Only they’ll never know what presents I’ll leave them.”

Analees Van Cleef gathered up whatever dignity she could in the face of all this ostentatious wealth. She walked crisply towards the back door and gently pushed the doorbell. She swallowed hard. She reminded herself that you’ve got to respect the rich. They have all the power.

The door opened and a French Maid - dressed for the part - curtsied. Analees thought that that looked neat. She had always wanted to have a maid herself, but she had never found the right man.

“Madame eess in ze pool area, pleez come with me. “

The maid turned and walked back into the house. Analees followed her, closing the door behind her - but only after a snap of Terri’s fingers let her know she was also in the house. Analees left her purse by the front door, and followed the maid.

As she walked through the house, she noticed that everywhere, there were signs of luxury. Ornate furniture, most of it burgundy or teak, presented 'power' as its predominant theme. Seascapes and boats dominated paintings on the wall, with rolling whitecaps everywhere. There was also an old steering wheel from a long forgotten boat, giving the room an atmosphere of 'command'. One wall was dominated by a large stuffed swordfish, silver in color. It was well over six feet long and was mounted on a dark blue board. Doubtless, its life had been taken by the Lord of the Manor at some point.

"Yes, Sally old girl..." thought Analees "You've really got it made!"

Her sharp high heels clicked along into the pool area.

Sally was reclining on a dark blue lounge chair. Analees could not help but notice that her old friend still had a fashion model figure, and she knew how to decorate it. Her silver one-piece swimsuit went well with the platinum dyed hair that rose from the top of her head like a crown. Her elegant fingernails and toe nails were manicured and painted pink. She wore matching pink lipstick.

The sun, shining through several large glass windows, bathed Sally in light.

Analees' feet were aching from those high heels as she clicked over to her old friend.

"Hi, Sally."

"Hi. 'Lees."

"Boy, life sure has treated us differently."

"I was lucky. Sort of like winning a lottery."

Sally gestured towards some folded chairs by a nearby wall.

"Get a chair and join me. What would you like to drink?"

"Coffee. Black, please." Then she added defensively: "I'm driving."

Sally turned to the maid: "And I'll have another martini."

Analees got a chair, unfolded it, and sat down beside her friend. She sat back and kicked her high heels off. She stretched her toes out. It felt good to let her feet breathe a bit. She glanced down at her dark red toe nails, visible through the dark blue fabric of her pantyhose.

Her hostess lay back, looked at her guest, and smiled wistfully. "Talking to you the other day got me to thinking about the good old days. It's hard to believe that I once wanted to be a nurse in an operating room, a surgical nurse. Now the only thing I see cut up is my filet mignon."

Analees smiled at the thought. She said: "Who would have guessed the winding paths our two little lives would take?"

"Life is nice - for me."

"It's been a lot harder for me. Nurses are getting laid off all over the place because the government thinks it can save money by hiring nursing assistants to do a nurse's job. We're like so many cattle waiting for the slaughter. And I don't have a rich husband."

"You could have had one."

"Wee Willie Wiener? Haha...How I enjoyed telling him it looked like a penis, only smaller. I wanted some real meat."

"You didn't have to say it in front of all his fraternity brothers, after he'd just sipped wine from your shoe."

Analees laughed. "Well, I guess I was tighter than a girdle that night. And that shoe was real yucky when I put it back on, so I got mad. The romances don't tell you about how yucky the woman's shoe feels afterwards."

They were interrupted as the maid silently served them their drinks.

Sally sipped her martini and said: The other day I read an article about a dominatrix who got burned out and quit. I couldn't help but think about you and that crazy cousin of yours - you

know, the Dutch dominatrix you used to copy with your clothes when we were in university. What was her name again?"

"Monique Von Cleef. She changed the 'Van' in our name to 'Von' in order to sound German. Like a Valkyrie. She was my second cousin. She got her moment of fame when the police raided her house of pain in New Jersey. A photograph of her, dressed to dominate in shiny black leather, flashed across the press around the world. She was holding a riding crop."

Analees sighed: "I really admired her royal bearing. She stood so tall in her high heels, and her golden hair rose from her head just like a crown."

"Oh, my poor dear Analees. You're like a Princess without a country to rule. How sad."

"We never know what lies in our future."

"Now that's a bit more than just building castles in the air. Now you're starting to live in them."

"I guess you're right." Said Analees, sadly. She felt like a deflated balloon after the party is over.

Their conversation continued as they spoke of many things, old friends and past events and memories that had been gathering dust in the attics of their minds. Where had everyone got to? Who had done what with their lives?

Eventually, Analees glanced at her watch. Three forty five. Terri would have got all the bugs planted by now.

Analees actually felt a bit sorry as she broke off the conversation saying she had best get going before the rush hour.

"Please come again." Said Sally. "Soon. You don't know how boring things can get around here."

Chapter 15: “Bells on Her Fingers, and Rings on Her Toes”

Following their first mission, both Terri and Analees underwent a detailed debriefing. Then came some time for frolicking, along with Sister Lee, the Little Bean. By her constant questions, they could tell that Little Bean was jealous of them. She constantly complained that they should grow together, as the three sisters of old had done. You could tell that she was just itching for action.

A month went by, then two. Now summer was upon them, like morning dew on the wild grasses. There was time for sun and swimming. Analees' skin began to take on a golden red hue. Everyone was saying how she took a beautiful tan.

Still, the girls were training hard, learning how to disappear. They also studied street survival techniques. Auntie Fann put it bluntly when she told them how it was. “Sometimes it is harder to survive on the streets of a city than it is to get by in the woods. The world of the underclass has become a modern version of hell itself, where human demons dwell.”

Analees cynically summed up much of that early summer. Their training was just like life itself. We work so hard, and in the end we disappear. It's as if for all our lives, we're learning how to disappear, until we finally get it right. Then we're gone.

Still, as their teachers told them, invisibility could be their greatest weapon. That's how the invisible world government survives, because nobody wants to believe in it. That's how their predecessors in the Mafia worked as well. So that is how their opponents must also survive, as well, if they are to fight for freedom against the hidden world government of globalism.

It was a secret skill from ages long gone by. The old shamans had had it. In China, Shaolin priests had used it to “walk through walls”. Handsome Lake had brought it back to North America. Now, Terri had it. Analees and Lee must learn it, too. And so they did. And the three sisters became the three shadows.

In their leisure time, they all went swimming and sunning. Beyond that, Analees was always waiting for Larry Longboat, who was always away hunting.

Terri Tall Corn was painting a giant snapping turtle breaking up a canoe. She explained: “The canoe is the way of the white worm, the way we've left behind.”

And Little Bean was reading, reading, reading. She was also talking, talking, talking up a summer storm. Like this one day when the three of them were sitting together near their new village.

“Man, like I think those old Iroquois legends are telling us about contacts with extra - terrestrials.”

Analees yawned and tugged at the strap of her navy blue bathing suit. She was thinking of how it went so well with her golden red tan. Terri kept on drawing. They had heard it all before.

“Hey, get this. In the old, old times, the main entertainment of the people in wintertime came from their storytellers. They say the first storyteller was a boy who learned how to do it from a talking rock. Get that - a talking rock. That's just how someone in prehistoric times would describe a radio. Now how would he be listening to a radio way back then?

There must have been outer space men!”

Analees smiled: “Lee, you'll get us all into a Star Trek adventure yet!”

Just then, Larry Longboat came up to them. He carried a big black ghetto blaster.

“Larry!” exclaimed Analees, who stood to greet him.

He put his hand up to silence her. She still went over and gave him a big hug. The firm flesh and muscles of his arms felt good as he hugged her back. She was glad that he was as topless as he was tanned. He whispered to her one word: "later".

Then he stood back and spoke to all three of them: "Sisters, you have really given us a breakthrough in intelligence by planting those little bugs for us. Gather 'round and listen up good, because soon we are going on another operation."

"Yay!" Lees shouted in joy. "Yay! This time, I get to go, right? Right?"

"Right, all right already." said Analees, like an exasperated mother besieged by a teenage daughter wanting to go out on her first date. "This time you're coming, too."

Larry lay down by a tree and began to fiddle with his machine.

"Gather 'round girls and listen to this here tape. This is a phone call our tech friends recorded from the bugs you planted."

As the radio crackled on, the women sat in a semi - circle around him.

A phone rang once. Twice.

"Hello."

"Hello, Mr. Smythe-White?"

The woman's voice was shrill, with a bitter edge to it that reminded one of a cold wet wind.

Another voice came on the phone, a man's vice, a strong voice that sounded like a full stomach after a hearty meal.

"Yes, my dear."

"This is Dr. Hillary Wilkins."

"Yes, my dear, I was expecting you to call. Right on schedule, I see. Maybe I should hire you as my secretary. You'd be better than the girl I have. You're always on time."

"Thank you sir. I am just reporting in as you told me to."

"So how is our little old project blanket coming along?"

"Ahead of schedule. My new idea is working out beautifully."

"That - what you call it?"

"Chimera. That's the word the Russians used for this sort of thing. The Chimera was a mythical being with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a snake."

"So what's mythology got to do with the project I'm paying you for?"

"It's just a name the Russians used for a hybrid germ. Now, I have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. I have a new genetic construct, a super germ that is three plagues in one. It is pneumonic plague, a new strain of smallpox, and the flu, three for the price of one."

"What kind of plague?"

"Pneumonic plague, sir. It is far more deadly than the Black Death that wiped out half of Europe in the Middle Ages. Turn that loose, and it will have impact sir. I promise."

"and the vaccine?"

"We're still working on that. We need to stabilize our genetic construct so that it will stay together long enough to spread, and we need a vaccine to protect the rest of us once we let it loose on the wind."

"How soon can it be ready? Our backers are eager to get on with it."

"We'll be ready to release it before Christmas."

"Haha. Very good, my dear. We'll give them a little Christmas cheer at the Food Banks!"

"One thing. Well, I know it's none of my business, but why is this scientific project of mine called 'project blanket'?"

"That code name? Well, my dear, I'll set your little old mind at ease. There's nothing much to the name. One of my help came up with it. In the days of the wild wild west, the U.S.

government gave blankets to the Indians that had been used by smallpox victims. So you might say the sort of thing we're doing has the stamp of government approval on it."

"We won't even need blankets. All you have to do is to spray a little of this at the Food Banks and the welfare offices, and my little super germs will do the rest."

"I do hope so, my dear. My partners are really counting on us to come through."

"Just don't forget my Nobel Prize for medicine."

"Don't worry about that, my dear, It's all set up. You'll get credit for the work of another scientist, one whose work we can tell the public about. This poor fellow had big gambling debts. So we'll let him out of them, and you'll get credit for the papers he has written and for his discoveries. I'll send you some material, so that you can begin to familiarize yourself with your Nobel prize work."

"It's a sure thing, then?"

"You can't miss. We control the pharmaceutical conglomerate that he works for. Once you get credit for this new discovery, it will be easy for me to buy you that Nobel Prize of yours. Just keep working on my supergerms."

"Like I said, sir. I'll have everything ready before Christmas. Even the vaccine to protect the beautiful people."

"God, you mustn't forget that. We don't want the wrong people getting sick."

"I'll call at the same time next week."

"Good. I'll talk to you then."

The phone clicked dead.

The group sat in silence for a moment. Then Lee spoke in a silly, sing song voice: "Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes, She shall make music wherever she goes."

"A nursery rhyme?" asked Analees.

"Ring around a rosie, pocketful of posies, all fall down."

"What does that mean?"

"I read about old nursery rhymes. One of the symptoms of the Black Death was a rosy rash. And in those days, people who had the rosies had to wear little bells to warn others of their approach. This is gonna be just like going back to the Middle Ages. Neat."

"No it won't be." Said Larry Longboat. "That's where we come in. I talked our intelligence people into giving our little group the assignment. After all, it was our raiding party that got the bugs in there in the first place. That's how we found out about that lab."

"Yay! I'm gonna see some action!" Lee was ecstatic at the news.

Larry turned to Analees: "We have also learned that the research is being done in the old building near the hospital where we used to work."

"We always thought that there was something fishy about those buildings. Patients sometimes reported seeing strange lights in there, and things. It happened too often to be coincidence. Sometimes staff saw something, too, but were afraid to say so because people might think they were crazy. Officially, those buildings had been empty for years."

"How could someone be that rotten?" asked Terri.

"She is a very bitter woman." answered Larry. "We got something on her when we accessed her FBI file. Their anti- terrorism people are also concerned about her."

"You can get into the FBI files?" said Analees.

"We know some burned out agents who want to help us change the world. All we need is a key, and we're into their computer systems."

"Boy, you guys really are sharp."

“Well, we got a background on her. Twenty years ago, she was a brilliant and promising young scientist. She worked in America’s biological warfare program. That’s why they kept an eye on her. Then she got married. After her divorce, the FBI tapes recorded her crying a lot. She would say things like: ‘I washed his dirty underwear for twenty years, and look what it got me.’ It looks like now she wants to make up for lost time. She wants the career and the recognition she might have had. And she’ll do anything to get it.”

“Creepy.” Said Lee.

“She must be all darkness, deep inside.” Added Terri.

And Larry laid it down: “Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to take out that lab.”

Chapter 16: "She Shall Make Music, Wherever She Goes"

"Going in to check things out first is usually vital in missions like this." Said Larry Longboat. "But it is too risky here. I did go invisible myself and look the place over two days ago. I'll brief you. This much will have to do."

He took one of Terri's ever present sketch pads and illustrated his talk as he went along.

"The lay out there is like the set up the Russians used in Siberia, simpler and cheaper than the American way. The Ruskies accidentally wiped out a village or two and a few scientists with their germs, but their set up was cheaper. This is a private sector operation, so they want to keep the cost down.

Project Blanket has layers, like an onion. The old Soviet scientists even used to joke about how Russian onions could make people cry a lot.

At the outermost layer are the dressing rooms, showers, that sort of thing. This is the area where they make the special nutrient mix to feed the colonies of death. Nowadays, they joke about how the germs eat better than many poor people do.

You can walk through the outer layer of the onion in street clothes, or naked if you have to strip to become invisible. At the next layer, they do a lot of basic work. Here, they wear dark green smocks, gloves, and hoods, and so should you.

The staff joke that it is sort of like a "GERM - AN" green version of the KKK. The "uniforms" were copied from lab coats used by German scientists captured by the Russians after World War II.

In the inner most area, called the Core of Death, you will need a full fledged space suit, complete with helmet. Here is the home of the supergerm. Compared to it, the germs developed by Japan in World War II, or the feather bombs used by the Americans used in Korea, or the even missiles fired by Sadam in the Gulf war, are like dinosaurs or ancient fossils.

You may become invisible, but that won't make you invulnerable. You can still be infected if you are not careful, so if you have to go into the inner core, you had better wear a space suit, too. And pray it does not leak.

The only one that enters the core area is Dr. Hillary Wilkins. The other scientists are all illegal immigrants from China, brought in by the Snakeheads. She speaks Chinese. They don't speak English. So she has a group of slaves as abject as any in the Sudan. The only difference is that these are scientists living in Canada.

The doctor is about your size, Analees. She does have an extra space suit in her locker, I checked it out. None of the other space suits comes close to fitting any of us. So, Analees, my dearest, during our raid you'll have to go in alone after her."

"Heyyy! Way to go, Analees! You got the best job!" said Lee, always eager for action.

"Thanks." said Analees. "I think."

"We can cover the rest of the building while the good doctor is busy working with her supergerms, but you'll have to go in alone and bring her out, without her lethal little babies."

"She may be ferocious in her little fortress of test tubes. Scientists often are."

"Over the years, you have talked down dangerous psychotic patients before." said Larry Longboat.

"I know you have." Added Terri. "You've done that to me. Calmed me right down. Just with that strong mind of yours. And afterwards, I'd be sitting in seclusion and asking myself: 'Why didn't I belt that nurse? Why didn't I belt that nurse?' So I know you're real good at winning mind games."

And so it was that they set out on what Analees was soon calling their Mission to Mars.

...

It was still cool in the pre - dawn morning. Dr. Hillary Wilkins' half heels clicked on the pavement as she crossed the secret underground parking lot beneath her lab. Her thin gold and brown cotton dress was left over from cheerier times, as were her brown alligator pumps.

She kept telling herself that there would be happier times ahead, once she had won her Nobel Prize for medicine. But for now, she had best bury herself in her work. And forget what had gone on before in her life. That was over with. Maybe the best things did lie in the future.

She walked over to a door and pressed the identification bar with her thumb. The computerized door then recognized her thumbprint and opened as if by magic. She stepped into an elevator. As she did, four ghostly figures followed her. The raiding party as invisible to the human eye as the Angel of Death - or the Supergerms that Dr. Wilkins was breeding in her lab.

Others in that raiding party went to their various assignments. Analees clung like a shadow to Dr. Hillary Wilkins. "I'm for you." She thought. "And one way or another, I'm going to take you out." Then she thought of how often in nature the prey do not know that they are being hunted until it is too late. "Maybe a bit of Paranoia is a gift of the gods." She thought. "Street smarts."

Dr. Hillary Wilkins went to her dressing room. As the boss - and the only woman - she had her own dressing room. It was like she was the star of this show, so, naturally, she had had a gold star put on the dark green door.

In the privacy of her dressing room, Analees saw Dr. Wilkins remove her clothes to reveal that she did not wear a bra. So she felt that this woman must be a kindred spirit of sorts after all.

Dr. Wilkins hung her dress up neatly in one of several old beat up lockers that she had in the room. Like the door, they were a dark garbage bag green.

Then the good doctor sat down on a bench and scratched her breasts, and jiggled them a bit. A half smile came across her face. Analees wondered what the woman was thinking. Then her naked breasts began to itch as well, as if in sympathy. So she scratched herself, too. And she thought: "What a nice world this would be if we could all scratch where we itched whenever we itched there."

Analees could see several posters on the lockers. It looked like Dr. Wilkins was a big fan of women's bodybuilding. She also had a photo of the famous female wrestler known as Chyna wearing a black T - shirt with white words on it saying "Lick my boots!"

One had to wonder what dark fantasies lived in the dungeons of Dr. Wilkins' scientific mind. What hells would she put her ex husband through if only she got the chance. Too bad she wasn't going to. The man probably deserved to lick her boots after she had walked through manure, but unfortunately he'd never have to do so.

The good nurse decided that someday she was going to get a T -shirt just like that. And some nice high shiny boots. And then she would wear them for Larry Longboat. That'll teach him to use date rape pills on a willing woman!

She must get back to the work at hand!

Hillary reached into one of the lockers and got out a bathing suit that looked like last fall's dead leaves lying on a forest floor. Gingerly, she put it on as an undergarment. It looked like her bathing suit was still wet with yesterday's sweat. She grimaced as she felt it and said one word: "Yicky!"

"This is damn dirty. But that rubber space suit is hot and sweaty and I can't stand being naked in it. So I gotta wear this. This is sure not what I bought the bathing suit for. Damn his eyes."

She kicked at the empty air in frustration, and then added : “Christ, I’m gonna have to wash all this shit out soon. Yicky Yick Yick! Oh, well, my little baby supergerms need their Chicken Soup, so I’d better go feed them. And, to be logical it is wet with my own sweat.”

Analees now realized that she would have to be naked in the god doctor’s spare space suit, after all, in becoming invisible, she had had to strip. UNLESS...

The doctor pulled on her white rubber space suit. Then she stepped into her white rubber boots and put on her white helmet and her white gloves.

She muttered under her breath : “I’m dressed like a bride going to wed my Supergerms. Oh, well. Most brides encounter germs, too, but they are another kind of germ. At least my germs are the product of selective breeding.”

Now, she looked ready for a space walk. She’d better be, for the room where she was going was just as dangerous as the cold wasteland of space. And a lot more fertile.

A wry half smile came across Dr. Hillary’s face.

Analees wondered what strange thoughts must be going through this woman’s head. Perhaps she had leapt ahead in time, and was standing on stage receiving her Nobel Prize for Medicine. Who knows?

Fully dressed, the doctor plodded towards another green door at the end of the room. She opened it and stepped through the doorway and into her inner sanctum.

Now that Analees was alone in the room, she could safely become visible. She did so. “Poof!” She just popped into sight, all of a sudden. Stark naked.

She still felt a bit funny, walking around strange places with no clothes on. She smiled to herself. If Dr. Wilkins suddenly came back into the room, she would have quite a shock.

“I can’t give that poor woman a heart attack.” She said to herself. “I’ll have to get dressed.”

She looked around and soon found the doctor’s back up space suit. It was a kind of silver - grey colour. As she handled it, it felt kind of clammy wet with old sweat. There was bathing suit hanging in the same locker also, orange and brown. It was a lot like the one the doctor had just put on. Analees could not help but think that Autumnal leaf patterns must have some special meaning for the woman.

Analees thought of how the two of them would be dressed just like tag team partners. Matching outfits. Well, sort of...

The bathing suit was also clammy. Dr. Wilkins was a dirty girl. She obviously did not like to wash her clothes. Very inconsiderate towards anyone who might want to drop in and put her clothing on. She should be reported to the Burglars’ Rights Association.

“Eww.” Thought Analees. “That bathing suit is - eww. But I do need to have some kind of undergarment. I don’t want to be naked in that rubber space suit. That’s just too kinky for me!”

Soon, Analees stood bedecked in her own space suit, ready for action.

“Boy.” She said to herself. “This is hot. Not exactly built for comfort. It’s hard to believe that some people wear rubber for kicks.”

She placed the helmet on her head and snapped it into place. Now she really felt like a spaceman - spacewoman, damn it! Why did they talk about little green men from flying saucers? Why not little green women? Or little silver ones?

For a moment, Analees’ mind went up in a flying saucer and she said “hello” to the commander of the Little Green Girls from Venus. She saw the girls’ lockers, and wondered what was in them. Would they have pictures in their lockers? Of what? Or whom? Probably of Stockwell Day. He’s spacey enough.

Analees consciously brought her mind back down to earth, where she had work to do. She stepped slowly, silently, towards the waiting door. She opened it and walked into a world of real insanity.

The inner lab was a mad maze of test tubes and glass vials and beakers set against a backdrop of several large vats.

Analees thought that if she didn't know better, she'd think the woman was running a still. She wondered what the whiskey would taste like.

At one end of the room, Dr. Hillary Wilkins was pouring a brown liquid from a beaker into a test tube. Analees smiled as she thought it looked like a Cola drink being poured. Then she reminded herself that these were deadly Supergerms.

Hillary Wilkins was startled to see someone else in her lab. This was not supposed to happen, not to her. She started, jumping backwards and almost knocking a table over.

"Who - who are you?" She asked.

"You might say that I'm your best friend."

"I - I don't know you."

"Relax. This is a friendly raid. My colleagues and I are going to get a little ransom money from your boss. Stay cool, and you'll be just fine."

"Ransom?"

"Relax, and we can work together to make sure that your little project stays on course while we negotiate."

The doctor grabbed the test tube that she had been holding and raised it above her head, as if threatening to throw it.

"Don't come any nearer, or I'll make you very sorry."

"Please calm down Dr. Wilkins."

"You know my name."

"The men who are with me are desperate, but they are practical, too. I've told them that there's more money in this if your experiment is still going on as we talk. They will spare your project - and you. But you must behave yourself. If you do anything rash, they might change their minds. "

Dr. Wilkins lowered her arm. Analees quickly grabbed vial from her and placed it in a test tube holder. Then she grabbed the woman's wrists firmly and crossed her arms in front of her. She looked at the woman, eyeball to eyeball, and said : "Trust me. I'll protect you, and your experiment. "Her voice was calming now. "Come on, let's join the others."

Dr, Hillary Wilkins' eyes sank to the ground. "O.K." was all she could bring herself to say.

Analees backed out of the room, still holding onto Dr. Wilkins' wrists and dragging her along.

As soon as they got through the door to the dressing room, Terri and Lee were there, naked as savagery itself. They had already taken care of their assignments, and had come in for a little fun. Gleeefully, they set to pounding and kicking a screaming Dr. Wilkins as they stripped her space suit off her. Wild war whoops filled the room as Analees leisurely undressed, her part of the assignment completed.

After the girls tired of laying a beating on their prisoner, they tied her up like a most uncomfortable pretzel. As Lee gleefully yelled : "Betcha didn't think you could bend that much, eh baby? It's surprising what you can do when we put our minds to it !"

Dr. Hillary Wilkins looked desperately at Analees.

“You promised.”

“So I lied.”

A half hour later, the raiding party, cloaked again in invisibility, stood by in a nearby grove of trees and watched as the old building burned up, taking Dr. Wilkins and her mad dreams with it.

Analees could not help but notice how the glistening red fire trucks contrasted so nicely with the cool green grass. Orange flames leapt out at the cool blue sky. Such vivid colour! Such contrast! The whole scene seemed so alive!

Still, she could not help but shed a tear for the wasted life of Dr. Hillary Wilkins.

Chapter Seventeen: "Song of the Flying Head"

Project Blanket died with Dr. Hillary Wilkins. Right after the fire, her secret employer left for an extended vacation in the Caribbean, transferring a lot of money with him. His partners had "strongly suggested" such a trip. They were "spooked" by what had happened. They came to believe that a special anti-crime section of the FBI was behind the destruction of the lab. They still had no idea that a "new force" had entered the game.

The New Iroquois Nation wanted to keep it that way. Thus, they decided it would be wise to lay low for awhile. Besides, summer time in North Ontario is a good time to lay low. So they did just that.

One summer day, Tall Corn and Little Bean were wrestling each other as Larry Longboat lay under a nearby tree, watching them. Yellow and green bathing suits were squeezed tight together as tanned limbs entwined like two plants growing together. This time, Little Lee was on top.

Analees appeared from behind a bush, wearing a navy blue bathing suit that reminded one of night time and the world of dreams.

"Sister Squash" began to hum the tune of "John Brown's body", a song they sang in the village to commemorate the great American hero, John Brown, who tried to ignite a slave uprising and was hanged for doing so. As the New Handsome Lake reminded them, John Brown was the hero of "Bloody Kansas", where he founded a settlement he called "the New Jerusalem" and fought the serpentine slavers from the south. Maybe someday, John Brown would also come back.

He was sorely needed, for in the America of today, you'd think the south had won the Civil War.

She thought of the words as she hummed: "Glory, Glory Alleluia, Glory, Glory, Alleluia..."

When she stood in the middle of the group, she stopped and spoke: "I have had a dream, and I need to tell it to you."

Larry Longboat clapped his hands to get the girls' attention: "Hear your sister, girls. She has had a dream. We must hear her dream, and help her answer it."

The two girls separated and sat cross-legged, looking at Analees. Larry sat on the ground beside them.

Now, the three sisters had learned about dreams, and the way dreams were in the days of long, long, ago. In those days, the voices of the spirit world would speak through dreams. Here and there, and now and then it still happened. The voice of the dream was still heard through the land. Among the New People. Among all those willing to listen. And only among them.

As the new people all said, the white worms are blind and deaf to such things. They are like grubs in the earth, only sometimes, real grubs can be worth eating.

The New Handsome Lake taught them: "When the voice of the dream speaks, the people must thank the Creator. Then they must all try to help the dreamer answer it with action, once the voice of the dream has spoken."

Larry Longboat had explained the old ways of the dream to them: "Suppose a little girl is sick and she dreams that she has a cat. All the people know that cats are great nurses, and that they are good at nursing the sick. So, then the people will give a kitten to the Little Girl, and she will get better so that she can look after it."

As he had said, "Many are the legends of the dreams of old."

So now the others sat around, waiting with great expectation.

Analees stood in the center of the group so that she could tell her dream. Her stomach trembled just a little bit, but she told herself that these were her best friends, so she should feel at ease. She began:

“In my dream, I am alone, walking in the woods. Pale moonlight bathes everything with a faint yellow glow. Everything feels kind of funny, as if the forest was trembling with life.

Terri interjected: “It is. It is. At night, the forest is full of life. It always was, Only now, you are able to see what has been there all along.”

“O.K. I know. But I’m sore afraid as I walk through the world of my dream.”

“Do not worry. We are with you.”said Larry.

“In my dream, I feel that I am being followed through the pale moon light. I glance behind me and I think I see something move in the bushes. My steps go faster.

I look back again. Something is flitting from tree to tree, following me.

I hurry on. I look back again. I can see it now. It is a Flying Head.”

Many are the stories about Flying Heads, heads without bodies that haunted the woods in the time before time. Their magic was very strong, as strong as the grave. Like autumn leaves, they flew through the air on the cold wind.

Analees had learned something of the old Iroquois way of telling a story from watching Larry and the New Handsome Lake as they told their stories. She let her eyes go wide open, like a cat does when it is seeing something in another dimension. She gestured slowly with her arm, sweeping it around the group.

“Have you ever been pursued through the moonlit forest, like a hunted deer, followed by an angry Flying Head?”

“No.”The two girls said together.

Lee said: “Was it that horrible Dr. Wilkins’ head? She sure cried a lot at the end.”

Terri added: “What happens next in your dream?”

“The Flying Head is getting nearer, nearer now. I can feel its cold breath on my neck. I turn to face it, and then I see. I can see that same face in clear water, or in a mirror. It is my own head that is following me. I am that Flying Head!”

“That is great magic!”said Terri.

“Like - wow!”said Lee.

“The lips of the Head are ruby red, the hair is golden.”

“Just like you?”asked Lee.

“I see the lips tremble. My Flying Head now speaks to me. The voice is frail and brittle and comes in whispers like the wind. This is what it said.: ‘I am hungry, as hungry as the grave is cold. Go tell Larry Longboat that he must feed me, feed me with his magic seed.”

Larry stood and went over to Analees, facing her. He placed his strong hands on her shoulders.

“You dreamed a good dream, much like the dreams of many years ago. Your heart spoke in your dream. I understand, and now I have to answer it.”

He threw her to the ground and then threw himself on top of her. As she gasped for air, he thrust his warm manly meat into her mouth.

“Mffff! Mfff!”

“Now it is time for me to speak.”He said. “I’ll answer your dream with my flesh.”

“Mffff! Mffff!”

“If your Flying Head is hungry, I must feed it, feed it with my living seed.”

“Mfff! Mffff,mffff! “

And so he did. She writhed and squirmed beneath him. Then she began to hum: “Glory, glory Alleluia!” And her tongue just went crazy.”

Her mouth soon filled with bitter juices. She swallowed, and was free of her dream.

Both lovers laughed as they sat back and caught their wind.

Larry smiled: “In the old days, when you had a dream, you could ask for just about anything you wanted. Nowadays, people would be too bashful.”

“Come, wrestle with us.” said Terri.

Lee added: “I had a dream that you were ‘rasslin’ with us.”

So now, all three sisters wrestled, and entwined, like plants growing together in the warm summer weather.

Analees was happy with all that touching. She ached for more of it. For so many years, she had stood aloof, playing the role of “Head Nurse”. She had touched no one, and let no one touch her. Now a Flying Head had changed all that.

The sun shone down on them, so bright that Analees could feel the light shining right into her skin. And she saw that she was happy in this new life of hers, as happy as the summer sun is warm.

Soon they would all go swimming to cool down, and splash each other, like little girls playing. Their magic would change the blue waters into silver splashes that would vanish back into the water, like hidden treasures.

And so their lives went on from day to day. It was that kind of summer.

Chapter Eighteen: "Day Trip"

They looked for all the world like a middle class family on a holiday. One would never think of them as an Iroquois War Party. But that's what they were.

Their large power boat cruised leisurely along the St. Claire River, seemingly no different from countless other such small craft on a hot summer day. Analees' eyes drank in the cool blue waters of this great river, and the song "Old Man River" went through her mind. She began to hum it. From the wheel, Larry Longboat smiled at her. Somehow, he always seemed to like it when she started humming.

"Sister Squash" was incognito in a bright red bathing suit, a red headed wig, and silver sunglasses. She called it her "Ann of Green Gables" disguise. But somehow, she didn't think very many people would mistake her for Bluenose Annie.

"Oh well," she thought, "I'd rather be a Hot Tomato than a Great Pumpkin anyway. And this is a Hot Tomato outfit!" She smiled to herself.

Terri stubbornly clung to her ever present yellow, and Lee still faithfully wore Little Bean green. However, Terri did wear a long brown wig that did change her appearance. She did reluctantly agree that her blonde Mohawk hair style might stand out a bit. Anything that stands out can be a means of identification, unless you can change it. Like ditching a wig, or something. And one thing that Terri was not about to ditch was her Mohawk hairstyle.

Analees stood looking up at the warm summer sun. She felt its hot fingers caress her face.

"Thank you, Father Sun." She said.

She liked the little show they were putting on. She enjoyed the fantasy of having Larry Longboat as her husband and the two girls as her teenage daughters. She felt that, for a few brief seconds, she had stepped into the kind of life that she might have had. She even liked the name of the boat, "Whispering Wind."

Larry's harsh voice brought her back to reality.

"Get ready. We're almost there."

Several islands covered in thick bush lay right ahead on the river. Larry steered the boat into them. Soon, they were in an area of shallow water covered by trees. They seemed to just disappear, as if the island had silently swallowed them, like a very big fish eating a very small one.

"Twelve thirty. OK girls. It's time to unwrap our little present."

"It is sort of like a Christmas tree," said Terri. They all laughed.

The three sisters stepped carefully onto the main deck of their big cruiser. They began to roll a tarpaulin back from a large object that it had been covering.

Analees whistled and whispered: "What a beautiful missile."

"It's a real antique. Sort of like a classic car," said Larry.

"Looks modern enough to me," said Analees.

"The SA-N-1 Goa anti-aircraft missile was first deployed by the Russians in 1961. As far as missiles are concerned, that makes it an antique." Larry could sound so matter of fact at times.

"And we're going to fire this antique?"

"It is still good enough for our purposes. We don't have to have 'state of the art' stuff. Well, let's go, girls. Just like we practiced it up north."

Larry walked over to Analees and placed his strong hands on her bare shoulders. "This is just another raid. Do what you're told, and I'll explain it all later, Trust me."

Then he kissed her on the mouth, long and juicy and probing. Her toes tingled. She relaxed and hugged him.

“OK, Larry. Trust.”

She looked down at cold gunmetal body of the old Russian missile. Fins juttied out from it. She could not help but think that it looked like some legendary Great Lakes sea monster from old First Nations myths. It seemed so out of place here on this pleasure craft. The she thought to herself: “Us girls are pretty unusual soldiers, too, with our bathing suits as uniforms and our bodies as our weapons. But that does make things interesting. Guess it must be an adrenaline rush, like going out on parade at a beauty contest, or going on the hunt.”

“Ogopogo”, as she lovingly called it, was about 45 feet long. At the bottom, it was about three feet in diameter, but after about six feet, it tapered quite a bit. Big square fins stood out at the base. Two small delta wings shot out from the center of the fuselage. And at the head, about a yard before the rocket came to a point, were two small delta winged stabilizers. Antique or not, this thing looked lethal.

Ogopogo lay on a piece of black machinery that was apparently some sort of jack. Larry began to pump it up, until the rocket lay at a 45 degree angle. He then rolled a metal shield in beneath it so as to protect the boat. He bolted it in place.

“Now to line up our guidance system.”he said. He looked at his watch. “We’re just a bit ahead of schedule.”He went below into the cabin.

Analees felt excited, like she was getting in on “man stuff”. It was like he could say to them: “Silly girls, you just stay there and watch.” Somehow, she found the scene quite sexy.

Above, there were no clouds in the sky. There was no wind now. Everything seemed so calm.

Analees and the girls exchanged worried glances. Then Larry came back from the bridge with a small black box. A small control stick stood out from its side, as if it were a miniature video game.

He walked over to the rocket, opened a small compartment in the middle of it, and flicked a switch. Then he closed the “hatch”on it and stood back. A light flicked on the black box in front of him.

“We’re nearing the time, my sisters.”He said. Then he went back to the bridge. Analees, curious, followed him. The girls had been briefed on a need to know basis, so they didn’t get into this part of it.

Larry Longboat turned on a radar screen and plugged the black box into it. The screen glowed, an electric lime green on a black background.

“Come on in, Sister Squash. Watch this. It is just like playing a video game.”

He shouted back to the others: “Hey, you girls, get back here and take cover.”

The others rushed forward to join Larry and Analees. Fear was written across their faces. As Terri said: “My ancestors never fired arrows like this one.”

“Just watch this, girls. It’s really neat. Better than the fist of July, the fourth of July, the Freedom festival, and Chinese new Year all put together.”

He flicked a small red switch at the bottom of his black box. The rocket’s engine roared like a Beast from the Book of Revelation. Pale silver smoke filled the boat, like steam from the burning lake of hell. The boat itself shook as if caught in an earthquake. Flame shot out from behind the Goa, like the Devil’s tongue.

...And it was gone. For a change, it was as if a bolt of lightning had been fired from the earth to the sky. It disappeared into blue of the sky to the southwest of them.

Analees could see two blips on the screen in front of Larry. He maneuvered the lever, and the smaller blip moved towards the larger.

“Just watch.”He said. “This time, the little fish will eat the big one.”

Analees glanced up into the distant sky. She saw a small white puff of smoke in the distance. At the same time, there was a flash on the screen of Larry's black box. Then all went black.

"Got him." Said Larry. "Now let's get out of here."

As rehearsed, they quickly unscrewed the shield and the jack and dumped them overboard. Larry fired the engine up. Reversed the motor, and backed out of the bushes. In no time at all, they were calmly cruising back to the north country, once again, the innocent tourist family.

Larry got a cooler out, and reached into it and got out a brown beer bottle and tossed one to Analees: "Here, this will complete the picture."

"But Handsome Lake doesn't approve of drinking" said Terri.

"So don't drink it, just hold onto it. It will make us look more like the all Canadian family."

Analees looked sternly at him. "That was obviously one of the weapons you have been buying."

"It's an old piece of ordnance, but it did the trick. We can get a lot out of Russia these days. Officers from the old Red army can't maintain their lifestyles unless they moonlight as arms dealers."

"We can't take on the whole world, even with all the arms in Russia." She said.

"We don't have to. We are not alone. Around the world, there are many other renegade villages a lot like us. There are even European Indians who copy our ways. One village has been going in Germany for over fifty years. There are others in France and England and even hid in the Swiss Alps. And a modern leader, like the War Chief Pontiac of old, has brought them all together. The people of the New Handsome Lake are only one part of the picture.

There are others, too, who love the Mother Earth. All the outcasts of the world are uniting against the forces of globalism. It's like we are white corpuscles in the bloodstream of the planet, sent to cleanse it of disease."

Analees folded her arms and leaned against the side of the cabin: "You said you would tell me more about this "raid" we are on when we were on the way home."

"This is part of a major operation involving several villages. One of the biggest we have yet run. It is a great honor for me as a war chief that they chose us for this raid. It is an honor for all three of you as well."

"Tell me about it."

"It's called 'Project Hess.' It is modeled after a World War II triumph of British Intelligence.

You see, we just blew up a Jumbo Jet. Many deaths will provide a smoke screen for the one. Her name was Elizabeth Beattie. She was a secretary. Not much in the eyes of the world. But without her, billionaire George W. Kingston cannot function. You see, his brain has been addled a bit by drugs, and he wasn't too bright to begin with. But as part of a New England Brahmin family, he's inherited a post in the secret world government that lies behind the IMF. They are the ones that really run everything. Politicians are merely figureheads for them. And George W. is about to take his turn as chairman. With his secretary gone, we can maneuver our own woman into her position. We'll be able to control the secret world government."

"What does the name 'Project Hess' mean?"

"In world War II, the Brits managed to discredit Hitler's Deputy Fuhrer Rudolf Hess, suckering him into flying to Britain with a peace proposal. Then they installed their own agent, Martin Borman, as Hitler's personal secretary. Borman became a key agent."

“How do you know all this?”

“Because we Iroquois worked with British Intelligence back then. We were a sort of secret weapon ourselves, with our mystic abilities to become invisible and to use the dream in the hunt. We taught the Brits how to move like shadows in the night, but we did not teach them everything we know.”

Terri had turned on a portable radio and was listening to music...something about heading back to the North Country. That was her favorite song these days.

A news flash came on. “There has been a terrible plane accident north of Detroit. A Jumbo Jet has crashed, killing all 417 passengers aboard. More on this when further information becomes available.”

Analees looked out across the river. She saw a young girl water skiing. The girl looked so innocent. The nurse wondered if she would ever be as innocent again. Inside, a little voice told her: “Only in your old age, when you yourself are a patient in geriatrics. Then you can be a child again. If you live that long...”

Chapter Nineteen: "Eight Golden Looneys"

"Ahhh. Nature is so-ooo beautiful. See how the cat can make her mouse last all through the long lazy summer afternoon "

Terri laughed. She snapped the elastic at the side of her yellow bathing suit. She stretched her thighs. Analees' head was held firmly in place between those long legs, caught in a scissors hold. The woman in the navy blue bathing suit squirmed and writhed. Terri had ambushed her on the way to the swimming pool.

"I give. Ohhhh. I give."

"Well, I don't." said Terri. Then she'd moved her legs so as to muffle Analees' mouth. After awhile the muffled sounds stopped and the woman went limp.

Terri disengaged and stood above her. She prodded Analees' face with her bare foot. "Wow. You really are out of it. What do I do now?"

Just then, Lee entered the room. She was out of breath from running.

"Tall Corn. Stop playing with her. Is she out cold?"

"What's the matter with you? They said I could play with her a little bit."

Terri rubbed her foot back and forth across the woman's mouth. Analees' body shuddered.

Lee insisted: "Handsome Lake wants her back for tonight. "

"I thought she was mine for the day."

"Uh. I think there's been a change of plans

"Appearances can FOOL YA. She seemed so ice cold. You saw her while we got her ready before."

"Handsome Lake just said that wine improves with age. Imagine that. Maybe he likes that 'Ice Queen' look".

Terri looked down at her foot, which was now rubbing on Analees' lips and her open, gasping mouth.

"Isn't it neat what you can do to someone when they are out cold? I missed my calling. I shoulda been an undertaker."

"That's not funny. If she becomes our Leader's woman, you could be in big trouble."

"I never thought of that. I was just playing with her."

"Well, you better stop. You don't want her to wake up and find your foot on her mouth, do you? "

"Guess not. "She stepped back.

"You gotta get her to think all the rotten things you done to her are all a bad dream."

"I never thought he'd want HER back. I shoulda stopped when she said 'I give.'"

Analees began to stir. Terri bent down and took her hand.

"Looks like you sort of passed out, sister...then it was like you were dreaming something, just having a bad dream, that's all. Are you O.K. sister?"

She helped her groggy playmate to her feet.

Lee tried to look innocent as she said :

"She didn't do nothin'. Honest. you just passed out."

Analees groaned. Playing with Terri could be fun, but sometimes she overdid it a bit. Still, she did have nice legs.

"You must have lit ancient fires. The old man wants you to dance for him tonight. "Lee leered at her.

"You don't look like no dancer." Terri sounded cynical again. She turned to Lee: "What's this

dance bit?”

“You know how we each have a song that’s special to us?

Handsome Lake had a dream. He said he learned that you have dancing in you somewhere. Inside your head. He said that every woman has a dance in her. He wants to see your dance.”

”That’s private.”

“Not to him. He can enter people’s minds.”

“Best we bathe her” said Terri. “Looks like she got real sweaty while she was dreamin’.”

With that, she patted Analees on the bottom. “Come on. Let’s get you undressed.”

Terri slowly peeled the bathing suit from the older woman. Analees stepped out of it. Again, she was naked.

Terri picked up the dark blue cloth in two fingers, like one would a worm:

“Boy, you sure sweat a lot. This is soaked.”

She dropped it to the floor.

The girls led their older “sister” to another room. Lee ran a warm bath in a big blue tub. Terri just stood by, playing with the elastic at the bottom of her yellow bathing suit. Analees stood beside her, her arms limp at her sides.

“Come on, let’s get on with it.” said Lee.

Terri took Analees’ arm and gently led her to lie in the bath. She practically purred: “There, there, Sister. This will help make you feel better. It’s so nice and warm.”

Analees got into the bath. She sat down. She looked up at Terri and whined: “Why are you doing those things to me? Just when I think we’re friends, you jump me again.”

“I want to make you a better woman.” Terri smiled. “You’ll see, the best is yet to come. Trust me. We got a secret sisterhood, and you’re in line for membership.”

Lee tossed a dark blue wash cloth to Terri saying. “Here, Tall Corn. She’s your toy.”

“Such nice firm flesh.” Terri began to wash Analees’ back with the cloth. “That time you spent in the gym paid off.”

“Bet this is the first time one of your patients washed you.”

“Yeah. It is. It feels real different.”

”Good?”

“Yeah, it does feel good, damn it! I like it. Now, get my other tit.”

“Your nipples are nice and stiff.”

“Well, don’t stop now.”

The two women merrily splashed in silence for a moment. Terri washed Analees’ torso, then her arms, her legs, HER FEET.

Terri sucked on a big toe, and looked Analees in the eyes, saying : “When you were little, did you ever play ‘This little Piggy’ with your toes? Well, I’ve got a different version. Yummm. yum.”

After going over Analees’ toes with her tongue, she stood beside the bath. She paused for a moment, then she leaned over and whispered: “Is there something I missed? Ahhh. Yes. Your peach. We must not forget the peach.”

She took the wash cloth and began to rub her former Nurse’s crotch

Lee, who was sitting in a corner, chimed in: “An apple for the teacher, a peach for the preacher”

Terri began to sing, sounding like a drunken sailor:

“Scrubba,dink...scrubba dink...scrubba, scrubba, scrubba dink.”

“Hey. Don’t pinch that “

Analees sat up, startled.

“Relax. Here we are free, so you can enjoy. Come on, my Sister, you’re all tensed up now. Let me rub your neck. There, that’s better. You’re getting nice and loose.”

“Oh, that does feel good.”

Terri turned to Lee: “Well, Little Bean, you been studying your lessons today? What did you learn in school today?”

“They taught me about our moons. How we count them, starting when the new moon wears horns. How, every now and then the elders add a moon just so we don’t get midwinter moon in August.”

“Let’s hear what you learned, Little Bean. “

Terri continued to wash Analees. Now she was doing her buttocks with the cloth, exploring a bit.

Lee stood stiff, erect, like a schoolgirl reciting her catechism:

“The year begins with the Midwinter moon, the snow moon of February. Then, in March, the sap flows in the Maple trees. It is the Sugar Moon. Then comes the Fishing Moon, and then the planting Moon. Next comes the Strawberry moon, then the Blueberry moon, then the Moon of the Green Corn.”

“That’s good enough.”Terri stood back and wiggled a bit in front of Analees.

Tall Corn’s voice was filled with youthful laughter:

“Now I’ll show you MY favorite moon. It is the moon of the Tall Corn.”

She slithered sensuously as she lowered her yellow bathing suit and mooned Analees. She turned and winked at the woman sitting in the bathtub.

“Interesting things can happen under the moon of the Tall Corn. Just wait and see.”

With that, she let her swimsuit fall to the floor. She stepped gracefully out of it. She stood there for a moment, naked. Her crotch was also clean shaven.

Terri smiled shyly, and patted herself: “You see, I have a peach, too. I have a nice, SMOOTH peach.”

With a careless foot, she tossed the yellow lump at her feet into Analees’ face. Again, Terri giggled:

“I had a dream and you were in it. Stand up.”

She took Analees’ arm and helped her to her feet: “Step over here.”

Analees did as she was told. Her wet flesh glistened. Terri’s voice was suddenly serious: “You know about our dreams. A dream is like a hungry belly. It must be filled, if we are ever to be at peace. Now come near, nearer.”

She stood facing Analees. She placed her hands on the woman’s hips:

“In my dream, we rubbed our smooth peaches together. Here, let me show you how. “

She stood with her legs apart, sort of straddling Analees. The taller woman rubbed their crotches together slowly, sensually. She began to chant something. Soon, Analees was getting into it, standing on the balls of her feet to get close to her friend, pushing her crotch out so that Terri could rub it with her own “peach”.

“Ah, see my sister. There is no taboo that my dream cannot devour. Yes, yes, YESSS! You

feel so good. Come with me into my dream. Come, share my dream. Ahhh. Thank you, sister Squash. Ahh!”

When they were done, they stood back, looking at each other in silence.

“Terri?”

“In my dream, we are able to enjoy each other as it was meant to be, like it was in the time before, like in the Garden of Eden.”

“Terri, I’m ashamed. You’re my patient.”

“I was your patient. Now, I think you are mine. We’ll use my dream to cure the sick that comes with your inhibitions. You see, if I dreamed it, it must be O.K. So relax. You did enjoy that, didn’t you?”

“Yes, I...damn it, I did enjoy it!”

Terri screamed a victory cry : “AIEEEE- YI - YI !”

Lee added: “In the Garden of Eden, there are no nurses and no patients, only lovers.”

“It was nice. “Analees sounded as dazed as she was.

“Now. I guess I’m supposed to dance? How?”

Lee smiled at her now :

“**He** can **enter** people’s minds. **He** says that you dance in your dreams. He wants to join you there, in your dreams.”

“Wow! This is way out.”

“It’s only as way out as your dreams are. So it’s O.K. “

Terri patted her former nurse on the behind, then added:.

“Get it? Like it was with us just now.”

“I’m tingling all over, like a glow.”

“I’m feeling good, too. It was my dream that did it. The Creator blesses us when we live our dreams. You will see. You helped me with my dream. Can I help you with your dancing?”

“Well. ummmm. I guess I m going to do an exotic dance. Like I read about Mata Hari...”

“I’ll bet you always wanted to. “said Lee..

“Little Bean, I’m looking forward to seeing our sister dance. Maybe I’ll get some more nice dreams after that.”

“Like peaches and cream?”

“You like my peach, don’t you Sister Squash?”

“Well, uh. I will need some help with my dance. I’ll need some clothes. “

“Clothes? You look pretty good without any. “

“Clothes can make a dance come alive. “

“What sort of clothes? “

“Silks, slips and gowns and stuff. girlie stuff.”

“We got lots of that in the communal store room. Some of our tribe were reduced to working the streets before they were rescued. Little Bean here and I went through that stuff once.”

“How do you dance for a Prophet? Like Salome did? She danced for a Prophet. Well, sort of.”

“Girls, you know how I love to read?”

“What’s that got to do with dancing?”

“Like history. Like, I read about the dancers in the golden olden days, in the last century. I

always wished I could wear corsets like they did.”

“That’s phoney!” Lee was annoyed. “Like, it fakes things so that their bodies look different. It’s cheating.”

“Life is an illusion. That’s what people really want. Falsies, girdles, Playboy’s airbrush. The steroids used by bodybuilders. It’s all the same.”

“It’s like a dream.”

“Like our dreams?”

“That’s right. Hey, like the greatest dancer was Mata Hari.”

Analees thumped her chest. “And Mata Hari wore silver metal falsies ! ”

“You sure wont have to !” said Lee, and they all laughed.

“I never knew that you could learn such neat things in history books.” said Lee. “I’ll have to get some falsies.”

“Yes. You should get some falsies. They’ll make you feel better.” Analees smiled. “There was another dancer back then, an American girl named Loie Fuller. She got her man to build a hall just for her. She was sort of chunky. So she used lights and moving mirrors and veils to cover for her.”

“Never heard of the chick.” Lee snarled.

“She was big at the turn of the last century.”

“I get it. You’ll use the same sort of tricks.” said Terri. “and you’ll be big in this century.”

“I don’t think we got any corsets.” said Lee. “so you’re out of luck.”

“I got a black rubber bathing suit. That will do.” said Analees.

“Hey neat.” said Terri. “I get it now. In your mind, those bathing suits of yours become corsets.”

“And I.” Analees stood tall. “I can be Mata Hari, Queen of the Continental Courtesans!”

“Hey, this is even better than a nurse novel !” exclaimed Lee.

“Well.” Terri looked thoughtful. “We got your ‘corset’ for you, then. What else do we need?”

“Shoes. High-heels to lift the spirits a bit.” “We’ll need lighting, Terri. Loie Fuller used to fill the room with flames as she whirled about. Can we get some full length mirrors?”

“Yeah. I think so. And the lights, too. I can figure that out with help from some of the guys.”

“You can dance for them later, as their reward. Come on, Little Bean. We got work to do.” The two girls left to hunt for props and lights and costumes. Analees sat down. To calm herself, she took several deep breaths. She lost her thought briefly in each breath.

“Yes,” She said. “I’m really, going to do it. I’m going to dance for a kingdom! If I get to him, I could become the High Priestess of His New Religion! I could become a real life version of ‘She Who Must Be Obeyed!’ Even Monique Von Cleef never made it that far up the ladder of success.”

So Analees began to plan what sort of dance she really would do.

“Let’s see, now. I’ll put in a touch of the exotic east. I can’t be Mata Hari without that. Now, what to mix with it? How about an ounce or two of Marilyn Monroe? Yeah! Holy light bulbs! I’ll add a dash of Marilyn.

Let’s see now. I had that exercise tape, “Eight Pieces of Silk Brocade. Mystic exercises that Chinese soldiers did in ancient times. That’s mysterious enough even for Mata Hari. And that now for that dash of Marilyn. Analees remembered a song: “One silver dollar, one silver dollar...”

She said to herself: "In The River of No Return, Marilyn sat on a piano in a saloon and sang a song called 'One Silver Dollar.' She had a green corset on, and red high heels. In that movie, Marilyn Monroe and Robert Mitchum flee from the Indians along a wildly raging river. He does seem to shoot a lot of Indians along the way. I always wanted to play Marilyn's part, but now it seems the Indians have captured me and what's more, I'm getting to like it here.

So now I do have quite a little cocktail here, two shots of Mata Hari mixed with a tall glass of Marilyn Monroe! I'll call the dance 'Eight Golden Loonies'. Say, that has a nice ring to it.

Only in Canada would they have a dollar coin called the looney. Someone stole the original design so the government went to a fall back coin with a loon on it. No wonder the mafia - even it's Lesbian Leaders - feel at home in the land of the Looney.

I wonder if the girls really can get some mirrors? Boy, if the staff at the hospital could see me now, they would eat their hearts out."

The girls came back and they got down to work.

Finally they were ready.

It had taken the three of them all day to set things up. At last, the moment of truth drew near.

Stage Lights were waiting.

Seven full length mirrors waited for one dancer. Eight figures would flash about the room.

"Eight Golden Loonies".

Analees stood erect in her high heels, feeling that she was a towering figure.

As she stood, playing with her rubber bathing suit, a door opened behind her. Larry Longboat stepped into the room.

"My love, I came to say goodbye. For a little while. I have to go back to the world of the white worms to gather up some more people for our village. Why are you dressed sort of funny? "

"I'm going to dance for Handsome Lake. He says that every woman has her own special dance. He wants to see my dance."

"Oh."

For a few seconds, Larry Longboat looked off into the distance. His eyes seemed to blaze with some strange fire. Then he turned to her and said :

"Be careful."

"You be careful, too."

"I'll be OK. I'll be staying at your old home. We kept it as a safe house to use when we have to go south. Maybe someday, you will come south to help me, and we can both stay there. And rescue others from the ways of the white worm. But for now, I must go alone. Be careful. I have had bad

dreams of late, dreams like the weather when it is building up for a thunderstorm. Remember this, whatever happens, I love you, now and forever."

He hugged her and he kissed her, harder than she liked but still nice and sloppy. His tongue made a quick tour of her mouth that got her toes to twitch a bit.

Then he turned and left the room.

Analees looked down at the shiny black rubber bathing suit she was wearing. It felt clammy, with meldew?

"EWWW ! "

That bathing suit clutched her skin, and made her think of old things in cold basements. That sort of put her in the right frame of mind.

A gold zipper sparkled up from between her breasts. It sort of winked at her.

"Let me fly like Monique would! Like a Valkyrie."

Her heroine, Monique Von Cleef, had been wearing an outfit just like this one when she was arrested for prostitution. The New Jersey vice squad arrived just before she could lay a whipping on an undercover policeman who had hired her. Spoil sports! They could have let the fellow enjoy a couple of strokes and, say, a kiss of her foot. She could have had a great entrapment argument.

Monique was what they call an independent. There was no biker gang to protect her. She got forty days in jail. That would never happen to a girl who worked with the gangs. Some free enterprise system!

The girls had dyed the shoes red. So our wanna-be dancer now had real red heels, just like Marilyn did in that movie.

“Move over, Mata Hari! I’ll make your long dead eyes bulge with envy.”

Soon, Analees waited in the wings behind a purple curtain. Lights flashed like lightning. The waiting room was filled with the smell of incense. It had a dream-like quality to it. At the far end, The New Handsome Lake sat alone on a throne of gold

Analees looked down at her red high heels.

“In those shoes, I could re-seduce a Prophet. And thereby, become a high Priestess of a New Religion, just like in my dreams.”

She snapped the elastic at the side of her swimsuit.

“And what would everyone think of our little nurse then?”

They had found some good music for her. Exotic. New Age sounds for an ageless theme.

At last, she entered, wrapped in red silk, gliding like a ghost. For a moment, it was as if Mata Hari had come back in her body, as if the long dead dancer now moved the arms and legs of a modern Valkyrie.

Her first move was based on a Tai Chi form called “Stork spreads wings”. Then, in her mind, she became a snake.

“It’s fun being a snake”, she thought.

Slowly, sensually, she used her body to trace a figure eight. Her hips undulated like rolling hills. Then she rolled slowly down to the floor, and

slithered up to her feet again. Her lone audience leaned forward in his seat.

She wriggled and writhed around the room. Red streamers flew behind her, swirling, sweeping her audience along with her every move.

It seemed as if red flames were burning in the mirrors as she slithered by them.

Rhythmically, she rocked her hips back and forth.

She could see his eyes upon her. She could almost feel his hot breath, too. She threw her streamers across the room. They floated gently through the air.

Suddenly, she stood still, tall, and straight, like an Amazon warrior now dressed in black armour. All that was left of her clothing was her shiny black bathing suit and her red high heel shoes. She extended her right arm. With her left, she drew an imaginary bow. Then she fired it. Next, she held a bow in her left arm, and fired it as well. She did it again, and again, four each side, eight times in all.

And then the woman softened. She bent her knees and touched her hands to the floor. She stood, very slowly rolling herself up. Now her legs spread, like the tapering ceiling of a cathedral. She rubbed her hands slowly up her thighs, moving her fingers towards the altar of her womanhood, then on, on past her waist line, above her head, like the wings of a butterfly opening.

It felt like fire burning in her belly. She fell prostate before his throne. She looked up at his bare feet. Then she kissed one of them. The music ended.

“Was it like your dream?”she whispered, using a husky voice.

“It was even better.”

“That’s because it was my dream, too.”

The New Handsome Lake hoisted her above his shoulder and carried her off as a prize piece of game to through a dark doorway, into his bed chambers.

In the wings, another man looked on, like the prehistoric Longnose of legend, lurking around the rim of the world. And Larry Longboat’s heart became like a black hole filled with hate.

Chapter Twenty : “The Magic Summer”

The taste of venison melted in their mouths as they sat together in the shade of the woods. A warm summer breeze caressed the three sisters.

Terri leaned back, topless in a yellow skirt. She was drawing, as always, sketching a new painting. Her special magic painting lay nearby, propped up against a tree. It showed a great stag, a King of Stags, wearing a crown of antlers. She had called the painting “Magical Hunting.”

Analees was writing in a notebook. She was wearing her “cool dream” dark blue bathing suit and a light blue and white patterned skirt that looked like white clouds floating across a midday sky. She called this outfit of hers “Night and Day.” She had taken to naming her outfits the way an artist gives a title to a painting. The magic of the summer seems to have brought out the creative in her.

Lee wore a green dress. She was watching Terri, as she so often did. Her brittle voice broke the silence, like turning on a radio filled with static.

“Terri. Tall Corn. Tell me about your new way of hunting again.”

“It’s really an old way, a very old way, as old as the dream itself. It’s like it was in the time before time, when people used to make magic drawings.”

“Long, long ago?”

“When everything was in the now. Like we try to be. Only back then, the people lived in a Lake of magic, like fishes swim in water. I know it’s gonna be hard, but we’ve got to find our ways back to those days.”

“I think I understand.” Said Lee. “It’s like - awesome. Your magic makes you a better hunter than Larry Longboat.”

“And I do not need a gun.”

“From what I can see, your mind is better than any gun.” Said Analees. “It’s like applied ESP. If only I could learn how to do it.”

“Someday you will.” Said Terri. “I promise that on my coming grave.”

“Oh, Terri.” Said Lee. “Nurse Cleef, make her stop that...death talk.”

“Soon, I will be riding the King of Stags in the other world, riding him as if he were my horse. On the next Devil’s Night. That is coming up soon.”

Terri smiled and put down her drawing for a moment. She stood and spoke, as if to unseen spirits: “Sisters, we must be grateful to the forest, for we do share its life.”

She turned to Analees: “I made that drawing of the King of Stags and then I held the picture of it in my mind as I went to sleep listening to the slow drum beat of my heart. In my dream, I went into the dream of that great stag. I told him that I had sweets for him and then I warmed his mind with soft thoughts. The next day, I met him in the forest, and he came to me, trusting me, as if I was his mother. My spear thrust through his heart, and soon we warmed his flesh on our cooking fires.”

“Yay! We fooled him! We fooled him!” Lee jumped up and did a little victory dance. “We fooled the King of the Stags!”

Terri smiled: “Just promise them a little sugar, something sweet. Then thrust your spear deep. Hunting is just like business!”

Analees looked up from her writing and said: “Don’t gloat so much. Maybe someday, a King of Stags will come to fool us.”

“Oh, don’t be silly.” Said Lee.

Terri added: "Do not fear his vengeance. His spirit is safely inside us, for we took it in when we ate him."

"Ooo" said Lee. "That's kind of creepy."

"No." said Analees. "It's not. They always say that you are what you eat."

"Does that mean that you are Larry Longboat?" asked Lee. "You eat him all the time." The two girls giggled.

Analees just sighed. "I've been thinking a lot lately. It's like it's all energy. All the world is energy. And me? I'm just a clump of energy, too. I'm just a wave in the lake where we're all swimming. Just like your stag. We're all part of the same lake."

"You're catching on. That sounds like the wisdom of the olden days."

"Gee, Terri Tall Corn..." Lee's voice was filled with admiration. "You sure have dug up a lot of the old ways. Sometimes they seem to be like bones from one of those common graveyards you told us about. You remember how, on the night of the Dead, people would bury their dead before moving on to start a new village. That is kinda neat. But, like, you are true to the past. And, like, you're learning all that old stuff and teaching it to us, so the past will live in us, too."

Analees added, with a sarcastic sneer in her voice: "It's sort of like we are eating the past, eh?"

"When you're a blue-eyed Mohawk, you've got to try harder. You've got to be true to the old ways. How else are you going to show that YOU ARE BLOOD?"

And with that, Terri sat down and went back to her drawing.

Analees read through her notes again. She was not used to reading poetry, and here she was, writing it. And she had told the others that she would read some of it to them in a few minutes.

Terri showed the others the newest painting she was working on. It was going to be an interesting painting: a tornado with the face of an angel.

"In the old days, the people understood Tornadoes better than they do today. You see, Tornadoes are a special form of Angel. They are the ambassadors of God. They are sent to warn the people that they are doing wrong. Like Handsome Lake says, a machine can't do no more pollution if it's upside down. And a gambling wheel don't turn so good if it's buried in the mud. So you see, Tornadoes are good things if you understand them."

The Tornado Angel's face was sweet innocence personified. Analees was looking forward to seeing what this painting would look like when it was done.

Terri smiled, and added: "When are we going to hear your poem?"

Analees blushed slightly, and stood up: "Well, I guess now is as good a time as any."

The two girls sat cross-legged as Analees moved into a part of a clearing that was spot lit by the sun. She held up her notebook and read from it.

"So they spent the summer together,
In the Land of Hiawatha, in the Forest Home of Legends!
In their hearts there was no scheming,
Spirits spoke when they were dreaming -
And they listened to the Dream."

Analees paused for effect, making eye contact briefly with the girls. She took a deep breath, and continued:

"Sharing, caring, ever loving,
Every heartbeat still rejoicing,
In their prayer, ever thankful,
For the Ways of Yesterday."

Analees held her arms open as if to embrace the other two, and continued from memory.
“The Three Sisters grew together,
As their namesakes once had done,
Warm and happy, like a Turtle,
Basking in the Summer Sun.
And the Sun shone on the water,
Sparkling silver in the sun,
Silver Angels, see them dancing’
Where the tiny streams still run.
Soon their too short season passes,
And their little dance is done.

Then the Harvest came upon them,
Cooler breezes came along.
Winds were growing ever stronger,
Autumn warriors rode their song.

Summer’s silver hair was thinning,
like the wisps upon the corn.
Soon the summer’s plants were lying,
Dead, beneath the Winter’s scorn.”

Chapter Twenty One: The Other Side of the Hill

Hank O'Malley stepped down from the flight from New Jersey. He entered the labyrinth of Pearson International Airport. He never thought he'd be here on this kind of mission.

Hank wore a plain gray suit. He carried a small black attaché case, the common badge of businessmen everywhere. His other luggage would be sent on to his hotel room. He looked completely ordinary, very, very average: typical middle-aged middle America, part of the "silent majority".

After a stint in 'Nam when he was very young, Hank had become a career FBI man. His stock in trade was to fit into crowds, not to stand out from them. He liked it that way.

Just past 50 years of age, Hank had a home in the suburbs. He was happily married - well, he was married anyway. That's what counted. That way people would know he wasn't queer. His wife was always busy dieting or exercising or getting a perm or buying a fur coat. He often thought she was more interested in her mirror than she was in him. Oh, well, his sons were turning out OK, more or less. One of them was in line to go to West Point, the other one was in drug rehab. The younger son was determined to make up for the failings of his older brother. The older brother, Hank junior, had advised him, quoting an old song, "Not to do the things I done." Hank junior was doing well in his twelve step program. That is the best that one could hope for in his case. He was "clean and sober".

Hank O'Malley smiled. All in all, things had turned out well in his life after all. He had his Sunday afternoons to sit around and drink beer with his buddies and watch NFL football. So life was good.

At the airport, he was met by two men.

One of the men wore a gray suit, too. Sam Stevens was a commander in the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). He was a big man with a tiny wife and three strapping sons. After hours, he seldom socialized with other policemen. His idea of a good time was going to Harvey's for breakfast after church on Sunday with his family. He was sick to death of crime and criminals. He often thought that if he had not gone into police work, he would never have met such awful people. Still, someone had to keep order. He often felt that it was sort of like being a garbage collector.

The man with Stevens wore blue jeans and cowboy boots and a white Montreal Canadiens sweater with a matching toque. He had what looked like a week's growth of beard. It was speckled with both black and white hairs that betrayed his advancing age, and gave him a grizzled Lumberjack look.

Jean LeMaire was a commander in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He was not the sort of Mountie you find on a musical ride. Most of his career had been in drug enforcement, much of it undercover. Divorced, he now found his big release in hockey. However unjust the world might seem, there was always "the Good Old Hockey Game" to take your mind off things. Somehow, it preserved what sanity he had left.

The three men introduced themselves, shook hands, and went downstairs to a waiting limousine.

All the while, the watchful spirits of long dead Iroquois Warriors watched them as they plotted their dark plots.

These brave policemen, Western, Conservative, even by the standards of 21st century North America, were as materialistic as Mao Zedong and Communist China ever was. They had no idea that their every move was being watched, even recorded, by men who in their own lives had been as tough as anyone in modern Special Services, and who still held to own idea of "the

old ways". For these ancient warriors, the way of war was the way of the Spirit, and they daily thanked the Creator for the gift of life. They could only shudder at the materialism that they saw all around them.

The big black limousine moved majestically out from the curb under the cautious control of the chauffeur who wore a black uniform that would make Hitler's SS proud. His black shoes were so shiny they could pass any rich man's dress code. His ramrod stiff posture showed his military background. His crew cut hair did, too.

The car glided like a luxury liner casting off. Soon, the three men were speeding along a crowded superhighway. They slid down a winding ramp, and into the City of Toronto.

To the side, they could see the Sky-Dome and the C.N. Tower. They turned left away from these two "symbols" of Toronto.

Now they entered the real city. They crawled through crowded streets, past street vendors and stores plastered with "Sale" signs, past colorful movie marquees and flashy bars with 'round the clock table dancers. That is the true Toronto, full of druggies and street people and crooked merchants, and even the homeless and the starving.

Jean said, wryly "This place used to be called 'Toronto the Good.'"

Their limousine now crossed a big eight lane type intersection. They drove past a series of neat gray civil service buildings. They finally pulled in and parked by one such building.

The three men got out of the car and went up to a dark glass door. Steven's punched in a controlled access code. The door opened. The men went in. Inside, they walked by an empty reception desk covered with fresh flowers. They went down a long gray hall. Stevens used a code to unlock the second door from the end and they entered.

Stevens smiled as he sat down at one end of a long oak table: "Get some coffee, guys. We'll be awhile."

A coffee pot was already full. It sat on a small table in a corner of the room. A red light indicated that some anonymous assistant had already been at work, readying the room. The three men helped themselves to Styrofoam cups. There was a dark red rug on the floor. "Too bad we can't have something stronger," said Stevens as he sat down and beckoned the others to join him.

"We have to be careful about such things these days. It doesn't look good. Stevens raised a Styrofoam cup: "Cheers."

Jean was relieved. He didn't have to make excuses for not drinking. Unknown to his employers, he had dried out at Westover, a private treatment center. It was no longer safe for him to drink, if it ever had been.

"How are things back in Jersey?" Sam led the way with a little small talk, just enough to be polite. Quite an economy you've got down there." At least Sam's boss, the Premier of Ontario, thought so. So, naturally, such thoughts were in vogue among the senior civil service.

Jean cast his eyes towards the door. Yes, he'd been to Jersey, just in time to see his hero Jacques Lemaire, and the New Jersey Devils eliminated from the N.H.L. play-offs before the regular season ended a few years back. Then the bastards went on to win again under Larry

Robinson. In his mind, they proved that hockey would be as boring as soccer. He was not related to Coach LeMaire, who had been a high scoring superstar with the Montreal Canadians, but he enjoyed telling people that he was. The women might think that he was good breeding stock with rich relatives to boot. Good old Jersey! Nice hotels and gambling casinos for rich people. The rest of the place was a wasteland.

Jean could not help but remember one biker chick he'd met that came from New Jersey. She told him that she didn't give a damn about his "New Jersey Connection". As she put it, the New Jersey Devils were well named since they came from hell itself.

Needless to say, he did not get laid that night. She had, however, offered to let him eat her."Considering what had already gone into her that night, he declined as graciously as he could.

He let the others talk on, while his mind wandered a bit. "What would Ian Flemming do in a scene like this?"

"Hide out in Jamaica with a gold typewriter - and a lot of vodka?"

But then he thought of what his alcohol counselor had told him. "Remember, James Bond was just a fictional character. His creator, Ian Flemming, died young. So much for all that vodka!"

At last Hank O'Malley was finally getting down to business. Reports from a "confidential source" about a renegade settlement in Northern Ontario have been confirmed by satellite. We don't want another WACO. It might give people bad ideas. We are ordered to wipe them out, but we have to make it look like they started the fire fight, or like there never was any fire fight at all. Just one catch. There is a woman in that camp that we promised to get out of there in one piece.

The force we'll deploy is secret, not listed with any armed force. We'll use flying tanks, heavy duty helicopters on loan from our Russian allies, flown by an international force of mercenaries. That should minimize any troop losses we'll have to explain to the public. And besides, Canadian helicopters are not safe to fly anymore."

Jean whistled under his breath. He'd heard of those flying tanks. The Russian Hind helicopter is the most heavily armored aircraft in the world. It has stub wings that just bristle with rockets and deadly Gattling guns that shoot death. Its twin cockpits are like bulging eyes on some warped wasp, frightening even to look at. Good for crowd control. What a neat toy!

Heck, if you took the guns and the armor off, and added some gas tanks, it would even be good for search and rescue.

Hank was laughing, his face a mask of glee as he chortled:

"Those Ruskies know what they're doin' with their trouble makers! These are even better than the German Stuka dive bombers that kept refugees in line in World War II. That'll teach those damn tax resisters

Jean replied : "Yeah, like, sort of a peace benefit for the end of the cold war, eh? We get to play with their toys. It would be a lot of fun to fire one of them Gattling guns!"

Everyone laughed. Then Stevens asked the quintessential Canadian question: "Who is going to pay for all this?"

That sort of thing does come up when nobody has any money.

Of course, Hank had an answer: "The I.M.F. are footing the bill. They don't like tax revolts. It isn't good for business. Someone has to pay for the government's handouts to their friends."

Jean's mind wandered once again. He thought of how James Bond had an international conspiracy to fight: S.P.E.C.T.R.E. That stood for "Special Executive for Counter Intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion. "And now here he, Jean, was in the real world. Working for the I.M.F.!

Hank was getting out some paperwork from his brief case. His voice was matter-of-fact: "First we'll need to send in a scout to look over the place, maybe plant a few bugs for us. We'll need someone who knows the north, someone who can pass as a trapper."

Somehow, Jean had a pretty good idea who Hank was talking about. The three men got down to details.

In the corner, the coffee pot steamed on like a witches' cauldron.

In another world, The Spirits of the Ages listened, and when it was done, they flew through the dimension of dreams, going faster than the speed of light. And they came to Analees in her restless dreaming, and they told her what they had seen. Then she went to the New Handsome Lake and told him what she had learned.

Chapter Twenty Two: "Hunter's Moon"

Jean tossed and turned. His body burned all over. He was restless like 4 a.m. on the night of a real bad drunk. He opened his eyes. There was light. He was in a strange room with white walls. He lay on a hard white cot. Was it a morgue? Or a detox center?

"Oh, God I'm not back there, am I? Please, God, no. He remembered detox, all right. He found himself talking to some skid row bum who was in better shape than he was. The guy was talking about the different detox centers he had been in the way some men talk about hotels. Then the fellow got up and went over and sat down in a corner. He was wearing blue institutional pajamas. The man began to play with himself. No doubt the nurses were used to that sort of thing. Jean was not. So he had vomited. Right there on the floor...

"Oh, God. I've let you down so much. Deliver me from detox."

He closed his eyes and fell back into oblivion.

Now he was in some sort of dream world. He heard drums beating inside his head, pulsating like the rhythms of some primitive religious rite. He saw patterns below, geometric lines... he blinked. Yes, farm fields. He was far up in the air...in a helicopter. Yes. It came back to him. He was to check out that survivalist camp."

Once more, waves of darkness rolled in on him. Sleep came. When he awoke, he was back in the pilot's lounge of a secret Air Base near North Bay. He was seated at a table. He stared at steam rising from his black coffee. The walls were pale green.

"Hi, Jean."

"Hi, Hans." He had greeted his pilot.

Hans was a German "Freelancer" hired for the occasion. He was tall, thin, wiry, and red with sunburn. His slicked down blond hair was streaked with white. His face was just a little lined by the hard make-up pencils of middle age: job stress and family problems.

He sat down beside Jean. He was wearing a sweater and faded jeans. Jean wore a red and jeans, and a khaki toque.

"Goddam early at 3 a.m., Eh Hans?"

"Ya." Hans still had a slight accent, hardly noticeable.

Too bad criminals don't keep better office hours. I'll bet our criminals are asleep in their beds right now."

"Me, I wouldn't want anyone to see us land. It might sort of give your cover away. Say, your beard does look good and rough. Looks like you were in the woods all month."

"Never had any trouble looking rough. I just don't shave for a couple of days."

"You look like a real grizzly bear."

"Thanks. I think."

Just then, breakfast came. Sweet maple syrup flowed over golden pancakes for both men. There was also a cup of coffee.

"Hey, Jean, I read somewhere that this syrup was the only flavoring that your Indians used. That true?"

"It was in the days of the French Missions to the Huron, long, long ago."

"But at least they found lots of willing women, eh?"

"Except they had taken Holy vows."

"Not like us, huh?"

"so what's your holy mission, Hans?"

"Money. Just like everyone else. The money's good. I got bills to pay after my wife found her dream house near Munich."

"So how did you get into this sort of thing, Jean? You don't look like the money grubbing kind of guy. I've got a feeling there's something else you're after, buddy."

"Adventure. It sure as hell beats collecting sales tax in a variety store in north Ontario."

They ate on in silence. Jean noticed a painting on the wall. In it, silver blue Spitfire was sending a forest green Stuka dive bomber down in bright orange flames. Below, dark gray Ocean frothed, waiting for its meal.

Jean pointed to the painting and said: "Just think, Hans. In another age, we would have been enemies."

Hans laughed: "In its time, that Stuka was a lot like this Hind I'm flying you out in. Ya, it's funny. Now we are all on the same side. Everybody, even the Russians, is on the same side. But you and me, we're still flying into battle, aren't we?"

Hans finished his meal and got up. He took a newsmagazine from a rack in the corner. A headline proclaimed: "Indian Land Claims Erupts."

Hans sneered: "I see that you have them, too."

"Have what?"

"You know. Those types. Here, it's your Indians. In Germany, we have the Green Party. Same thing. Free Love and all that. There are nuts all over the world."

Jean smiled: "Sure, sure Hans. But I wouldn't mind some of that free love. I'm getting kind of itchy, if you know what I mean."

"I'm a married man, Jean. I take that seriously."

Jean looked at the last of his black coffee. It looked like muddy water - on a dark night. Again, blackness swirled around him.

He awoke. Again...he heard an engine...yes...He knew where he was now. He was sitting in the bowels of a Russian Helicopter. He saw a backpack open before him. Ah, yes...he had been checking his gear.

"Ah, yes. Here we go. Here's our compact black tube tent, fifteen meters of Nylon cord, fish line, snare wire, flashlight, magnifying glass, knives. All the usual crap. And of course there's my knives, the most versatile tool of all. Yeah, there's a Swiss Army knife, but my U.S.M.C. combat knife is my real treasure. I took it off a biker myself. It's sort of a war trophy."

He sat back for a moment and cradled a deer hunting rifle while he spoke to his knives: "Dear knives, you won't desert me like a woman can. You are always faithful."

The gun was a Browning "BOSS" A-Bolt TI Hunter. When he had it in his arms, he was the boss.

Jean rubbed the smooth and shiny butt of the gun. Lovingly, he caressed the long black barrel. Then he set it down and leaned forward to get back to his backpack.

He felt the lining. A miniature plastic radio and an antenna made of some space age metal nobody ever heard of were well hid in the lining. He could use tools in his Swiss Army knife to assemble a transmitter strong enough to reach Toronto's C.N. Tower. There, powerful receivers would do the rest. He smiled as he thought of how the French had used the Eiffel Tower in much the same way in World War I. Not everything travels by satellite, even today. Darn smart, those Frenchmen.

Jean smiled to himself. He also had two bottles of Vodka hid in the backpack. There was no need to push this sobriety thing too far, and out here, who would notice?

The plane landed with a thud. He grabbed his backpack and his gun and bundled out into the cold night outside. He crouched as he hit the ground. Behind him, the Helicopter, flying by infra-red light, lifted off, a dark shadow, barely lit by the faint moon.

Once again, the mists swirled around him as if he were a part of someone's dream. Maybe he was fading away as the dreamer does when he leaves the world of dreams as he wakes up.

He now walked in a dream-like world, where everything seemed to move in slow motion. Above him was the orange and purple sky of dusk. Beside him, dark evergreens cast long shadows.

He felt something strange, like someone else was inside his head. A voice seemed to promise that his loneliness would end soon, that it would all be OK again, just like in the early days of his marriage. It all sounded so crazy, but he felt that he was going to meet his wife again, all over again, just like when they were younger.

He saw it again. He was sure A dark figure flickered in and out of his field of vision. It was there...then it was gone. Then, there it was again. It seemed to appear, then vanish into thin air. He began to wonder if his mind was playing tricks on him.

Jean remembered hearing old Indian stories about forest spirits who shadowed hunters on their trips. He felt the trigger on his rifle. What was that old American motto? In guns, we trust?

“Allo...what’s this?”

The “hunter” stooped to examine a footprint, left in some mud. He thought he’d just seer something there.

Hey. Here’s another footprint. and another a path? A trail? Whatever it is leaves tracks. A slim footprint. It could. be a woman’s moccasin, but a woman THAT BIG?

Now he remembered tales of the Bigfoot. He had never believed them, of course. After all, even his own footprints on snow would get larger as snow around them melted. He was sure that was all there was to the legend. But there had been sightings reported around here lately, or so he’d been told when they briefed him. At that time, everyone had made a big joke of it.

But women being killed by black bears was definitely no joke. He remembered the story of an Olympic athlete who was running alone in the woods. Just such a bear had attacked her head, and killed her as she struggled for life. Pity. She did look quite attractive. If only they had met...

“Hey. There’s another foot print.”

He stooped to take a closer look. Something moved and hit him? Then everything went black again.

He stirred. Pieces of a crazy jigsaw puzzle began to come together. These things were not just dreams, they were fragmentary memories. Something had happened to him. He was on a mission, and he had been captured by...something, or someone.

He opened his eyes. It was a white room that he was in, lying on a bed. He raised his head a bit.

He saw a door, and three heads staring at him. Three women? One was small and childlike. Another looked like his ex-wife. And there was a tall woman, with her hair in a Mohawk cut.

He closed his eyes and lay back on the bed.

“Please, Dear God! Please let this all be just a bad dream!”

The door closed and he was alone again.

His kind are always sleep good”.

How did you do it, Terri?”

“Yeah, Tall Corn, tell us how you captured him.”

“I used my training from the False Faces.”

Terri was relaxed, in blue jean shorts, a white T-shirt and sandals.

“You two better join us False Faces. We learn some really neat things. It’s better than the Boy Scouts. Or even the Girl Guides.” She leaned against a beige wall.

“So tell us how you did it.”

Lee wore full length jeans, white running shoes with purple trim, and a purple T-shirt. She was casual, as usual.

"Tell us how, and maybe we'll join the club. It sounds just like Girl Guides used to sound."

"Come on Terri." Analees was sitting on a chair at a table in the middle of the room. She wore a black dress and her gold sandals with the straps. "You got us waiting with baited breath."

"I just disappeared."

"Come on." Analees leered. "There was more to it than that. We've been doing the same training that you have, only we're not as good at it yet."

"Well, O.K. I let the Spirits guide me, and I entered his mind. Then I led him to my hunting party, just as I led the Kind of Stags before. Then, I became invisible, and knocked him out. He never knew what hit him."

"Well done, Tall Corn. Analees laughed: "This is getting weirder all the time. Terri, you used to get awful mad at Bigfoot jokes, didn't you? I saw...you shoving one of your big slippers in a girl's mouth once. Is this some wild dream of yours that I have wandered into? Am I being set up or something?"

Terri interjected: "You see, in the time before time, there was an Indian people who lived where the sun sets. Their enemies were hunting them like so many deer. They fled over gold waters to an island near the land of the dead. The spirits on the island gave them magic to help them to survive. They learned how to vanish like the morning mist. Then they could be safe from their enemies. Over the years, their children kept the secrets of the Western islands. One of them came east and taught our ancestors. But it was too late then, for the white man and his invisible diseases were upon us."

Then she added: "You see, we have our own stories of forest spirits - and of Bigfoot."

Analees sighed: "Once upon a time, small pox must have seemed mysterious, too. Just like Bigfoot does today...I remember reading in a tabloid about Bigfoot beating a girl's head against the trunk of a car somewhere in Michigan..."

"She must have done something to ask for it." Terri smirked. "Us Bigfoots are always fair. Heck, I never gave you no beating you didn't need. Now, I'll bet you are grateful for the way I broke you in."

"The spirits who came to Handsome Lake taught him those things. And he has taught us. How to hunt and how to heal and how to...just vanish. And he taught us."

"Oh, come on." Analees was cynical: "Terri, you're a strong girl, I ought to know...but even you can't change the laws of physics. There must be some kind of trick involved."

"Sister, you still have so much to learn. Here, we live by magic...magic and the dream. This, our magic, is in the mind. You see, we control men's minds so that they cannot see us. That is how we do it."

"It must be quite a trick. I have seen you do it. I only hope that I can learn it."

"Keep practicing. It is hard to learn. I don't have it down right yet myself, and I'm blood. Still, I am getting better at it. This time out, I had to make allowances for my own weakness. So I used that weakness to help me."

Longnose raised an eyebrow: "How did you do that?"

"He could still catch glimpses of me. Sometimes. So I used that to set him up. I knew I'd flicker in and out of his vision. Like, I went by a muddy part where I knew I would leave footprints. I just knew he'd take a closer look. He did. I crept up behind him, concentrating extra-hard on staying disappeared. When he stooped down to look at my footprint, I booted him in the head and knocked him out."

"Ya-ay Tall Corn!" Lee leapt up with her arms in the air like a cheerleader.

"You did get your man, Terri." Analees smiled. She took Terri's hand in hers, gently. "You were really quite clever to fool him like that. "

Chapter Twenty Three: "The Guest"

Mother Mary Joy paused thoughtfully. "We will have to learn more about him."

She turned to Analees:

“You know, Sister Squash, You really are going to fit in here. I’m so happy for you. But first, you have another job to do.”

“For tonight, you are to go to our new guest. Make him like you.”

“What?” Analees could not believe her ears. “Go to him? What.. .what do you think I am, anyway?”

“You wanted to be a spy, didn’t you? You have always had a fantasy in which YOU were Mata Hari, the courtesan. Now you can really enjoy living that dream. Go to him. Wait on him. Become his friend. Find out about him. Of all our people, you are perfect for this job. Look - see these photographs.” She produced two photographs. She showed them to the girls.

“We found these things in an old black Bible in his backpack. These photos may tell us something about him.”

“Yeah.” snapped Analees. “Guys can be goofy that way.”

“This seems to be the latest photo.” She said. “Take a look.”

The first picture showed a woman standing in front of a gray building marked “‘Courthouse’”. She was wearing a red brown business suit, a pale yellow blouse, and an orange cravat. Her red hair was close-cropped. Her hard face leered at the camera.

There was writing on the back of the photo. Analees read aloud: “TO: MY DEAR EX-HUSBAND. Darling, I thought I would send you the photo I had taken just after our divorce went through. That was the happiest moment of my life. Thanks for the lovely memories. XXX...Sylvie.

“Wow!” Said Terri. “She must have really hated him.”

“Hey Terri” said Lee. “She looks a lot like Sister Squash here.”

“Come on, Little Bean. Squashie’s face is a lot more soft, younger looking...”

“Only since she joined us, Tall Corn. We make all the difference. She got a lot softer after she was with you the other day.”

Analees just blushed in silence.

Mother Mary Joy handed her the other picture: “Now see this one.”

On the back was written: “Our honeymoon, 1986.”

It was in the same handwriting as the note on the other one.

The color photo showed a couple on a beach. Analees whistled under her breath: “The sun-tanned young man in the brown swim trunks is the fellow that’s asleep in the next room.

“She sighed.” “The years have weathered his rugged face a lot. But it’s the same man.”

She looked back to the picture: “That woman beside him was his young wife.”

The woman beside the man in the photo just beamed. Her face shone as if it were glowing with Noxema. Her red hair was longer then. It had more lustre to it. It glistened in the sun. She wore a red bathing suit, a one piece that made her look like scarlet flame.

“In this photo she does look like you.” said Terri. She squeezed Analees’ neck.

Mother Mary Joy added: “We have found a red wig for you, sister. We can make you up to look like her...shiny face and all. One of the sisters in the village used to do make-up in professional theatre. When ‘our guest sees you all made up, he’ll dream of reliving the joys of his youth. Trust me, you will get to him.”

“What if he doesn’t love her anymore?” Analees was still worried.

Mother Mary Joy put her hand on Analees’ shoulder: “Don’t worry. He still carries her picture with him, doesn’t he? Seeing his ‘wife’ come back to him again will put him off guard.”

Their matron smiled at them as she stood back. “Your sister Tall Corn used the magic of the False Face to capture his body. Now you must use the wiles of a woman to

capture his conscious mind.”

“Hey - look...”said Terri. “It’s not that bad. Remember the dream you told us. You always wanted to be a spy just like Mata Hari. Well, here’s your chance. Don’t be afraid. You have done this all before, a thousand times. In your dreams. Now, live your dream!”

Analees stood, and Terri kissed her on the lips. The door slammed as Lee left the room. The three women sat down together on the bed and drank some Strawberry juice.

“I tell you, I really got to him. He wants to be James Bond - with that kind of thinking, he’s just got to be an R.C.M.P. officer!”

She gingerly stood outside his room, balancing a tray of hot juices.

“Why me?”She asked Terri, one more time.

“You look like his ex-wife. We often judge others by who they look like. Get it?”

“Yes.”she thought. “I’m gonna get it alright. The things a wanna-be high priestess has to do!”

She glanced at her red bathing suit. It fit like a shiny Dragon’s skin. It went well with her red Marilyn Monroe high heels. She brushed her long red wig out of her eyes, and entered the room.

“Ohhh...my head!”

He sat up stirred by the sound of her entry.

“Hello”she said in a whisper. She smiled.

“I think I’ve had too much medicine.. .again. the back of his head.

“You were unconscious when they found you.”

“Where am I?”

“On the outskirts of forever.”

“Where?”

“Do not worry. You are safe here. That is all to know.”

“Who are you? You look familiar.”

“I am your companion. Don’t you remember?”

“Uh.. .sort Of.”He was sure he hadn’t been drinking again. Or was he? People have slips all the time. And blackouts. He’d had a lot of those lately. Sure... that must have been what happened.

The woman sat down on the bed beside him. As things went on, Analees had the strange feeling that all this was really happening to someone else.

“Here, have this...”

He drank some warm juice.

Strawberries?

“Yes. “Again, she simply smiled at him.

He ran his hand along the side of her bathing suit...

“Let’s get you out of this.”

“What?”

“I’m a very direct man. I want what I missed last night. You won’t get off the hook this time, my little fish.”

“Can’t we - uh - talk about this?”

He stood and pulled her roughly to her feet. She struggled.

He kissed her mouth hard, his tongue slopping the taste of strawberry Juice all over. She kicked off her shoes. He peeled her out of her swimsuit as she squirmed a bit.

He threw her on the bed. As she lay stunned on her back, he got on top and started into her.

“Ugh! Baby--you’re tight. It’s hard work ramming it in...”

“You should feel it from this end, fellah,”

“Think you’re a comedian, or something?”

“Ow! No, I don’t.”

“Still laughing at me now?”

“Owww”

She shuddered as he pulled away from her. He stood beside the bed.

She sat up. She was crying: “I’m...I’m sorry. You didn’t give me much time...”

“In your business you shouldn’t need it.”

“WHAT?”

“NUTS! Lie down on your belly.”

“No...please. Not there. Oh, you fucking pervert! 000000! That hurts, you know? “

He got off her again.

She squirmed back into her bathing suit as if it could protect her, like a turtle pulling into its shell. Her face blazed red. She stood. She gasped for air. She stomped her foot.

“How would you like it if I did that to you?”

“With what?”

He laughed and grabbed her.

“You know, there was a president of the United States who bragged that he never left a woman until he had been in her three ways. “

“You’re not the president.”

“In this room, I am!”

He grabbed her fingers in a hold with his own fingers and forced her to her knees.

“Now I’ll teach you the art of conversation.”

He put it in her mouth.

“Mmmmmffff.”

“What’s that, baby? I can’t quite hear you.”

“Mff...mfff...MFFF!”

“Sounds like you’re trying to hum something, eh? Oh...those lips of yours feel soooo good!”

“MFFFF!” Her feet kicked the floor several times for emphasis.

“Ohhh...Good vibrations! Think you could hum something?

“Mffff.”

“No...not that. How about the Marine hymn, in honour of our southern neighbours?”

“Mffff...” She began to hum the Marine Hym.

“They say this is the best way to settle a marital argument. A little one-on-one. Dont. you agree?”

mfff.” Analees went limp, just giving up.

“At times like this, I just close my eyes and pretend it’s my ex-wife down there. Oh.. Sylvie...Sylvie. Ahhhh!”

He let her go. She fell back on her fanny, gasping for air.

He sat down on the cot

There was an awkward silence for a moment. He tried to break the ice, laughing :

“Hey, I thought up a nickname for you, baby. We’ll call you breathless You know, Breathless old girl whenever I get that done for me, I pretend it’s my ex-wife doing it. I wish it was her down there.

“So do I! If it was, it would have been a lot easier on my throat! “

With that, she spat something out.

He stood over her and offered his hand: “Come on...let me help you up. No hard feelings left, eh? “He pulled her to her feet, then hugged her. “You know, Breathless, You are a really

gifted conversationalist.

‘Why, Honeybunch!’ She put on a mock sweet voice.

Yo’ all just plum take a girl’s breath away.

There was a brief silence, then she burst out giggling.

‘What’s so funny?’

‘It’s just things...that’s all. When I was a little girl, I secretly wanted to be Marilyn Monroe. I guess I made it.’

‘How’s that?’

‘I read in the tabloids that she sucked her way to success. I guess I always wanted to get success without doing any sucking. Isn’t that funny? Me, another Marilyn Monroe?’

‘No. No, it’s not funny. Like, I always wanted to be James Bond, but this sure aint no Caribbean Island.’

She giggled again: ‘So I guess the joke’s on you, too, huh?’

‘So, Breathless, where’s my Vodka...shaken, not stirred.’

They both laughed.

Mr. Bond, this place is as dry as a desert, And right now, I’m pretty thirsty, too.

They sat down together on the bed and drank some Strawberry juice. The three sisters were in a sort of command room, surrounded by T.V. screens, electric lights, and spinning tapes. Computers sprouted everywhere, like mushrooms after a Midsummer storm. Handsome Lake sat in a modernistic chair in the middle of the room, looking like a misplaced starship commander. He was dressed in khaki army fatigues and a black beret. The women wore dark evergreen jumpers with maroon shoulders. The woman who designed the female uniforms for the village had been a Trekkie. It showed. She also got nostalgic for the white Go Go boots she wore as a teenager, so she added them to the uniform. Analees really liked the net effect. She could pretend she was Mrs. Peel in the Avengers.

Analees stood in front of Handsome Lake. The others stood together at his right hand side, with Terri nearest to him.

Lee was in fine sarcastic form. She snickered: ‘Well, if he’s James Bond, why does he think you are?’

Nurse Cleef snapped back: ‘Marilyn Monroe.’ Well, you’re almost old enough.” said Lee.

‘I am not I was a little girl when I saw her movies!’

Lee smiled: ‘Gee... Were you a little girl once? I thought you were always a nurse.’

Handsome Lake now joined in, with a twinkle in his eye: ‘Sometimes nurses are little girls at heart, still playing with dolls...right, Tall Corn? He laughed. ‘Oh, I know all about you two. Outside, you would have to be ‘careful’. But here...here, you have the Right to Freedom of the Dream. If you dream it, you can do it. So don’t worry about it. But let’s get back to our police officer in there. ‘He turned to Analees: ‘What else can you tell us, sister?’

Analees resumed her report: ‘I told him that I’d passed out in a bar and woke up as a prisoner here. I said I couldn’t remember anything else. I think he bought that line.’

‘It is plausible.’

Mother Mary Joy stood and went over to her. She took her hand: ‘I take it that you did not enjoy your little date with our guest?’

‘No. I didn’t. It left a bad taste in my mouth.’

‘I will help you get over that. ‘Her voice was loving. ‘and the Tall Corn will help me to do so. You did good for us. What did you learn?’

‘Someone in the government sent - him to scout us He is to report back. He can call in a helicopter. He wants me to go with him.’

"Maybe you should."

"What? You think I WANT to go with him? That drunk?"

"You won't be alone, Analees." She said. "These two will be with you, your invisible guardians."

"My what?"

"You want to get even with that man, don't you?"

"After what he did to 'me? I want to sit on his smug face. With a bare bum."

"Maybe we can arrange that. "

She smiled at Analees as she stood. Then she went over to her, and took her hand. She looked up, and slowly, a smile broke on her face.

"O.K." Analees added : "Make sure I get to eat lots of Pork 'n Beans first."

Everyone laughed.

"Analees, sister." Handsome Lake hugged her. The tension seemed to leave the room,

"Do you think our Mr. Bond likes you?"

"A little bit, yes."

"Does he trust you, just a little?"

"I think so. I guess the way to a man's heart is through his hard on.

"You really have got into that Mata Hari role, haven't you?"

"It is a lot more fun than being 'me'. I don't want to go back to being the person I once was."

"You won't have to. You say he likes alcohol?"

"He's always talking about it, so he must."

"When we searched his backpack, we found that he had some alcohol with him, even on what could be a very dangerous mission. My guess is that he drinks as much as I used to. Just get him away from this village."

He turned to Terri:

"Then you, Tall Corn, become invisible. We do have others more experienced than you at invisible stalking of prey, but those warriors do not know of his presence here. I do not want them to know. They would tell others, for no - one here keeps secrets from the others. That could cause panic. So you, Tall Corn, must be my war chief. When those two leave the village, follow them like an invisible forest spirit. Make sure that he disappears."

"I understand."

"Here..." Handsome Lake went across the room, got a staff, and threw it to her.

"Take my rod, and strike true."

"Wherever you go, I will be with you... as long as you Remember, THERE IS ANOTHER WAY OF LIFE. GREED IS NOT GOD...LOVE IS. For awhile you will have to be like the fish in a pond in winter, that swim beneath the icy surface. You three must live so that you can tell others that there is a better way of living."

Chapter Twenty Three: “The Guest”

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The woman sat down on the bed beside him. As things went on, Analees had the strange feeling that all this was really happening to someone else.

“Here, have this...”

He drank some warm juice.

Strawberries?

“Yes. “Again, she simply smiled at him.

He ran his hand along the side of her bathing suit...

“Let’s get you out of this.”

“What?”

“I’m a very direct man. I want what I missed last night. You won’t get off the hook this time, my little fish.”

“Can’t we - uh - talk about this?”

He stood and pulled her roughly to her feet. She struggled.

He kissed her mouth hard, his tongue slopping the taste of strawberry Juice all over. She kicked off her shoes.

He peeled her out of her swimsuit as she squirmed a bit.

He threw her on the bed. As she lay stunned on her back,
he got on top and started into her.

“Ugh! Baby--you’re tight. It’s hard work ramming it in...”

“You should feel it from this end, fellah,”

“Think you’re a comedian, or something?”

“Ow! No, I don’t.”

“Still laughing at me now?”

“Owwwwww”

She shuddered as he pulled away from her. He stood beside the bed.

She sat up. She was crying: “I’m...I’m sorry. You didn’t give me much time...”

“In your business you shouldn’t need it.”

“WHAT?”

“NUTS! Lie down on your belly.”

“No...please. Not there. Oh, you fucking pervert! 000000! That hurts, you know? “

He got off her again.

She squirmed back into her bathing suit as if it could protect her, like a turtle pulling into its shell. Her
face blazed red. She stood. She gasped for air. She stomped her foot.

“How would you like it if I did that to you?”

“With what?”

He laughed and grabbed her.

“You know, there was a president of the United States who bragged that he never left a woman until he had been in her three ways. “

“You’re not the president.”

“In this room, I am!”

He grabbed her fingers in a hold with his own fingers and forced her to her knees.

“Now I’ll teach you the art of conversation.”

He put it in her mouth.

“Mmmmffff.”

“What’s that, baby? I can’t quite hear you.”

“Mff...mfff...MFFF!”

“Sounds like you’re trying to hum something, eh? Oh...those lips of yours feel soooo good!”

“MFFFF!” Her feet kicked the floor several times for emphasis.

“ Ohhh...Good vibrations! Think you could hum something?

“Mfff.”

“No...not that. How about the Marine hymn, in honour of our southern neighbours? “

“Mfff...” She began to hum the Marine Hym.

“They say this is the best way to settle a marital argument. A little one-on-one. Dont. you agree?”

“mfff.” Analees went limp, just giving up.

“At times like this, I just close my eyes and pretend it’s my ex-wife down there. Oh..

.Sylvie...Sylvie. Ahhhh!”

He let her go. She fell back on her fanny, gasping for air.

He sat down on the cot

There was an awkward silence for a moment. He tried to break the ice, laughing :

” Hey, I thought up a nickname for you, baby. We’ll call you breathless You know, Breathless old girl

whenever I get that done for me, I pretend it’s my ex-wife doing it. I wish it was her down there.

“So do I! If it was, it would have been a lot easier on my throat! “

With that, she spat something out.

He stood over her and offered his hand: “Come on...let me help you up. No hard feelings left, eh? “He pulled

her to her feet, then hugged her. “You know, Breathless, You are a really gifted conversationalist.

‘Why, Honeybunch!’” She put on a mock sweet voice.

Yo’all just plum take a girl’s breath away.

There was a brief silence, then she burst out giggling.

“What’s so funny?”

“It’s just things...that’s all. When I was a little girl, I secretly wanted to be Marilyn Monroe. I guess I made it.”

“How’s that?”

“I read in the tabloids that she sucked her way to success. I guess I always wanted to get success without doing any sucking. Isn’t that funny? Me, another Marilyn Monroe?”

“No. No, it’s not funny. Like, I always wanted to be James Bond, but this sure aint no Carribean Island.”

She giggled again: “So I guess the joke’s on you, too,
huh?

“So, Breathless, where’s my Vodka...shaken, not stirred.”

They both laughed.

Mr. Bond, this place is as dry as a desert, And right now, I’m pretty thirsty, too.

They sat down together on the bed and drank some Strawberry juice.

The three sisters were in a sort of command room, surrounded by T.V. screens, electric lights, and spinning tapes. Computers sprouted everywhere, like mushrooms after a Midsummer storm. Handsome Lake sat in a modernistic chair in the middle of the room, looking like a misplaced starship commander. He was dressed in khaki army fatigues and a black beret. The women wore dark evergreen jumpers with maroon shoulders. The woman who designed the female uniforms for the village had been a Trekkie. It showed. She also got nostalgic for the white Go Go boots she wore as a teenager, so she added them to the uniform. Analees really liked the net effect. She could pretend she was Mrs. Peel in the Avengers.

Analees stood in front of Handsome Lake. The others stood together at his right hand side, with Terri

nearest to him.

Lee was in fine sarcastic form. She snickered: "Well, if he's James Bond, why does he think you are?"

Nurse Cleef snapped back: "Marilyn Monroe." Well, you're almost old enough." said Lee.

"I am not I was a little girl when I saw her movies!"

Lee smiled: "Gee...Were you a little girl once? I thought you were always a nurse."

Handsome Lake now joined in, with a twinkle in his eye: "Sometimes nurses are little girls at heart, still playing with dolls...right, Tall Corn? He laughed. "Oh, I know all about you two. Outside, you would have to be 'careful'. But here...here, you have the Right to Freedom of the Dream. If you dream it, you can do it. So don't worry about it. But let's get back to our police officer in there. " He turned to Analees: " What else can you tell us, sister?"

Analees resumed her report: "I told him that I'd passed out in a bar and woke up as a prisoner here. I said I couldn't remember anything else. I think he bought that line."

"It is plausible."

Mother Mary Joy stood and went over to her. She took her hand: "I take it that you did not enjoy your little date with our guest?"

"No. I didn't. It left a bad taste in my mouth."

“I will help you get over that. “ Her voice was loving. “and the Tall Corn will help me to do so. You did good for us. What did you learn?”

“Someone in the government sent - him to scout us He is to report back. He can call in a helicopter. He wants me to go with him.”

“Maybe you should.”

“What? You think I WANT to go with him? That drunk?

“You won’t be alone, Analees.” She said. “These two will be with you, your invisible guardians.”

“My what?”

“ You want to get even with that man, don’t you?

“ After what he did to ‘me? I want to sit on his smug face. With a bare bum.”

“ Maybe we can arrange that. “

She smiled at Analees as she stood. Then she went over to her, and took her hand. She looked up, and slowly, a smile broke on her face.

“O.K.” Analees added : “Make sure I get to eat lots of Pork ‘n Beans first.”

Everyone laughed.

“Analees, sister.” Handsome Lake hugged her. The tension seemed to leave the room,

“Do you think our Mr. Bond likes you?”

“A little bit, yes.”

“ Does he trust you, just a little?

“ I think so. I guess the way to a man’s heart is through his hard on.

“ You really have got into that Mata Hari role, haven’t you?

“ It is a lot more fun than being ‘me’. I don’t want to go back to being the person I once was.”

“ You won’t have to. You say he likes alcohol?”

“ He’s always talking about it, so he must.”

“When we searched his backpack, we found that he had some alcohol with him, even on what could be a very dangerous mission. My guess is that he drinks as much as I used to. Just get him away from this

village.“

He turned to Terri:

“Then you, Tall Corn, become invisible. We do have others more experienced than you at invisible stalking of prey, but those warriors do not know of his presence here. I do not want them to know. They would tell others, for no - one here keeps secrets from the others. That could cause panic. So you, Tall Corn, must be my war chief. When those two leave the village, follow them like an invisible forest spirit. Make sure that he disappears.”

“I understand.”

“ Here...” Handsome Lake went across the room, got a staff, and threw it to her. “Take my rod, and strike true.”

“Wherever you go, I will be with you... as long as you Remember, THERE IS ANOTHER WAY OF LIFE. GREED IS NOT GOD...LOVE IS. For awhile you will have to be like the fish in a pond in winter, that swim beneath the icy surface. You three must live so that you can tell others that there is a better way of living.”

Chapter Twenty Four: "Devil's Night"

She entered with a silver dinner tray, almost nurse-like in her evergreen uniform. She smiled at him:

"I brought you some supper." She placed the tray on the table. Jean lay naked and uncovered on the bed.

"Have I slept that long?" He yawned as he spoke. A guy can lose track of day and night around here... What's this?"

She lifted the cover.

"Corn - and a rice cabbage roll and tomatoes. It is a traditional recipe... The bread is also made of corn, It is fresh from the oven. Here. Feel. It is still warm..."

The smell of fresh-baked bread filled the room. His nostrils flared a bit as he inhaled. He sat up by the table.

She smiled: "Enjoy."

"Please stay... come, sit by me..."

She smiled modestly and sat on the bed beside him. He began to stuff himself like a hungry wolf.

"Mffff... good food. You cook it?"

She nodded. Well, she had got it from the microwave in the kitchen, which is just about the same thing.

He took a drink from a cup on the tray. "What's this?"

"Strawberry juice--like last night."

"Don't you have anything stronger? Oh--I forgot... You don't... well, look, I'm sorry about losing control last night. I wasn't drinking... but, ugh... I used to drink a lot. I quit. But now, sometimes I get drunk without drinking. It's like an acid flash-back, sort of. My brain goes back to when I was drunk all the time. They call it a dry drunk. I act just like I was drunk. It is kind of scary for me, because I lose control."

"It was pretty scary from this end, that's for sure."

"O.K. Well, I'm sorry." He stuffed his mouth with food again, and mumbled.

"No hard feelings, eh?"

"I hope not. Your hard feelings hurt." She gulped and reminded herself to be nice to him. She cooed: "It was all right. The Strawberry juice washed the taste away just fine."

"Well, it was your own shit, anyway. Like the psyches say, it's always your own shit."

He continued eating.

She squeezed his knee. "Don't worry. Just so long as you enjoyed it."

"These cabbage rolls are good." He stuffed a piece of cabbage into his mouth. -chewing it, he went on: "I read somewhere it's sort of soothing for the girl, just like sucking on her mother's tit."

"Why don't you try it and find out?"

"Hey, I'm a guy. I can't do that sort of thing."

"Some guys do." She winked at him. "I'll fix you up with a big black orderly I know."

"Do you still have your own teeth?"

"I wouldn't wear anyone else's teeth."

She squeezed his knee again: "You really want something stronger?"

He swallowed the last of his food. "You bet I do. You just gotta have some. Who ever heard of Indians that don't drink?"

"There is some hid."

"I knew it! I knew it! You know, my ex-wife used to say I could find alcohol in the Sahara desert."

"You really loved her, didn't you?"

"Sure I did. But I never made enough money for her. I'm just a policeman.

"You're sort of like James Bond. A lot of women look up to that.

"Not her."

He fell silent for a moment.

"Now, let's get that booze."

She handed him a red robe from a closet in the room.

"Here, put this on. We can't have you selling wieners in the hall, now can we?"

"Do I need a Vendor's permit?"

"We don't use money here...so if you want to use your hose on someone, it will have to be a freebie."

"Jeez...there goes my second job."

"I want my own clothes back."

"Why?"

"Why? Ugh...without my trousers on, I feel naked."

"You'd never be a good Scotsman, then. And here I was dreaming of you in Sean Connery's kilt."

"Very funny."

"Well, come on, Mr. Bond. Follow me. "

She led him out of the room and along a silver-blue hallway. The walls had etchings, fish, fowl, the waterfall.

"Hey, Breathless...you know, according to the American Medical Association, I'm not a fuckin' drunk. I'm sick."

Yeah...you're sick all right, and sickening, too.

They came to a drawing of a tomato. She pressed the wall. It opened, as if by magic.

"Here's your stuff. Get dressed."

He chatted her up a bit as he dressed:

"You know, they say I'm a problem drinker. Every time I have a problem, I have a drink."

"And then whoever is looking after you has a problem."

"Where is the hard stuff..."

"Some of us have a stash hid outside. I do have a problem."

"What problem is that?"

"You, Breathless. I got to get out of here. And I'M TAKIN' YOU WITH ME!"

"Thanks for asking."

He stood.

"O.K. So I'm dressed now. Let's go."

"You're starting to shake."

"Just like it was before. I've gone back out. Oh, God!"

"Gone...back out?"

"It's just a phrase. That's all. I get nightmares."

"What nightmares?"

"Never mind, That's private."

"Here, we are taught to share our dreams."

"You want to share my nightmare?"

"I think I'm already sharing it."

"Hey...there's my good old backpack. "He spotted it lying among several garbage bags.

”What is this, anyway?”

“It’s our storeroom. Many of those who come to us do not have suitcases, you know.”

Jean got on his knees by the backpack and began to rummage through it.

“It’s still there.” He stood up, and held up a bottle as if he were an Olympian bearing a torch. “My vodka!”

He unscrewed the cap and took a big swig out of the bottle. “Ahhhh...this will stop the shaking good.”

He took another big drink.

“You know, Breathless, I’m allergic to alcohol. Every time I drink it, I break out in a drunk. Here, have a swig.”

“Gee, do you? You could have fooled me.” She took the bottle. “Fellah, you must have precognition. You’re planning on getting drunk, so your mind has already gone ahead in time and got itself drunk. That’s kind of cute.”

She took a swig. “Ugh! That’s too strong for me.

“Beer drinker? Or wine?”

“Wine.”

“Hey...where’s my gun?”

She laughed, nervously: “Your gun?”

“Yeah, my GUN! It’s just like ME. It’s the BOSS! Where the hell is it?”

“They took it to the armory.”

“Take me there.”

He kicked her in the groin. She doubled up in pain. He kicked her in the forehead. She fell back to the floor, landing on her fanny. He stood over her.

“Breathless, I thought you’d learned your lesson last night.” He took another swig.

“Don’t hit me. I don’t know where the armory is. Only the warriors know that. And I’m no warrior.”

“Fuck it, then.” He got something from the lining of his backpack. “I’ll just leave a couple of these and we’ll be off...”

“What Is that?”

“A special transmitter. So my friends outside can hear what’s going on here, real space age stuff. It can pick

up conversations through walls and send them off into space. If this little baby...” He peeled off a transparent sticker and held it up to her...” were activated, an aircraft flying by would be able to pick up our conversation, if it had the right equipment.”

“Handsome Lake says that the mind can do that...if it has the right equipment.”

“Ugh. Yeah. Handsome Lake, what does this dude look like?”

“He’s tall and strong and bald. His eyes are the color of black coals. Why do you want to know? So you can kill him?”

“It would be quite a coup if I could capture him. But I’d need your help.”

“It would be easier for you to capture the wind.”

“That’s already been done. How do you think the Dutch made their windmills run?”

“They got Spanish Knights to tilt at them with their long lances. You see, it scared the windmills into running.”

“Dizzy dame.

“I thought my name was ‘Breathless’.”

“Well, are you going to help me get him?”

“Let’s get that drink first.”

“Well, I’ll never turn down a chance to drink with a pretty lady.”

“Pretty lady? Something tells me I just got a promotion...I think that outranks “dizzy dame”.

“Come on.” He drained his bottle, and threw it on the floor. “That ought to stop the shakes for awhile. Come on, let’s get that stash. WE can plan our kidnap project later. If we did get your leader, everyone else would give up, wouldn’t they?”

“All right, Mr. Bond...let’s go.”

She grabbed a black leather jacket from the wall and tossed it on... She led him back out into the hall. He followed her along the corridor, staggering as they went...attaching little bugs to the wall along the way. He went up to her and whispered? “Hey, don’t tell nobody about these bugs, eh?”

“I’d never do that. What would people think of me if I told them my boyfriend had bugs?”

She led him on. Finally, they came to the end of a hall. A gateway opened automatically.

“Hey, you guys don’t even have locks on your doors.”

“People don’t need locks here.”

They stepped outside. The morning sky was gray, the weather, cool and damp.

“Come, follow me through the maze.”

She led him through the maze. Ahead, the forest rose from a mat of mist that gave the place a haunted look.

“Which way do we go from here?”

She pointed into the woods. He led now, going slowly as he looked about for sentries. She followed, as if she was his woman.

“Owwww” He stood still. “What was that?”

“Why did you stop?” asked Analees.

“Something hit me. Hey!” He whirled around, then touched his lower back. “What the hell?”

Analees whispered: “Strange things happen in these woods.”

They heard giggling, one voice...or was it two...or three...voices coming from all around them.

Analees’ face was lit up with a strange smile. Her wig was slightly askew. It gave her a witchy look. She laughed wildly: “These woods are alive now. Don’t you know? It’s Devil’s Night beginning. suddenly a tall slim figure appeared beside him, to his right. The phantom was dressed in black from head to toe. It’s face was lined in red war paint, that mimicked the lines of age. It wore its hair in a Mohawk style.

Terri appeared so startling that Analees hardly recognized her at first.

HiiYAAAA “The figure snapped. “He can see me now. His mind is too slimy with alcohol I can’t get a good grip on it. His brain is like a greased pig at a stag...”

She carried the staff that Handsome Lake had given her. She raised it, across her body. He drew his U.S.M.C. combat knife from his backpack. He ditched his “luggage”. He backed into a crouch, like a crayfish retreating.

They moved around as if they were two strange insects engaged in a mating dance. He tried to catch her staff with the guard of his knife, only the staff was no longer there. He ducked back as she swung at his head, then leapt back as she swung at his shins. He raised his knife hand to block a swing at his head...and...

“Ohhhhh.”

She rammed him hard with a staff jab to the groin. He could feel her Chi, her vital

energy, striking into the very center of his being. He fell limp to the ground, face first. The last thing he remembered was her foot being placed on the back of his neck as she stood over him in triumph. Then, mercifully, everything went blank.

Lee popped out from hiding behind a tree, and stood, applauding. Analees clapped as well. She gleefully exclaimed: "Thanks. I needed to see him get that."

Lee moved back into a crouching position: "Now it's your turn, Sister Squash."

Terri gaped at her: "Little Bean, what are you doing? "

"Tall Corn, she is breaking us up. Just like she tried to do before." Lee pulled a Ninja shooting star from her pocket: "Let the stars decide."

Suddenly, Terri vanished into thin air.

"Hey, Tall Corn! Don't do that to me!"

Lee jumped back. She started to switch her star from hand to hand, the way an expert knife fighter would move his weapon. It is an approach aimed at confusing your opponent, so she won't know which hand you will use to attack.

"I'll get her anyway."

Analees just stood there, in shock.

Lee crouched, feinting a couple of times. Each time she faked a throw, Analees squirmed. She swallowed hard. She prayed: "Creator, whatever you are called, help me to get out of this."

Lee threw the star.

Suddenly, Tall Corn appeared - straight, tall, stiff as a board. The star protruded from her neck. Blood began to gush out of her wound.

Terri gasped: "Good Bye, Little Bean. I will love you always. Some day, we will grow together again. I know it. I will watch out for you from the other side."

"Tall Corn!" Lee rushed to catch the falling body. She eased the body down to the ground. She sat cross-legged holding Terri's head on her lap. She began to wail. Blood flowed down onto the earth beneath them.

Just then, Jean stirred. He took in the scene with an expert eye. He quickly deduced what must have happened. He stood. He was still shaky. He felt cold. Still, his head was as clear as a mountain brook. He grabbed his backpack in one hand and Analees in the other. He began to bolt out of there, like a bat out of hell. "C'mon, Breathless. Thanks for saving my life. Those two woulda had me for sure."

Chapter Twenty Five: "It's Halloween!"

IT'S HALLOWEEN

MEMO:

October 31, this year

TO: H. O'Malley,

coordinator,

Project WS tax 88962 code name: Wounded Knee II

FROM: J. LaMaire, Comdr. R.C.M.P.

In October of this year, I was directed to make surveillance of a renegade survivalist settlement located in a wilderness area north of Haley's Comet, Ontario. This is my report herein.

I disembarked from helicopter transport near the suspect encampment. I managed to probe the area for about 8 hours before being taken prisoner. Despite considerable resistance on my part, I was overcome by overwhelming numerical force.

The occupants of the suspect encampment apparently believe themselves to be a return of ancient Iroquois society. They hold all things in common, even their women. They do not drink or gamble or pay any other taxes. In view of that, they should be considered to be highly unstable. They should be considered to be armed and dangerous.

They are led by a self-styled religious prophet who calls himself Handsome Lake. Judging by his description, he may be Benjamin Hawkeye, a businessman wanted in several jurisdictions for absconding with funds from several large corporations. Most of these companies were involved in environmentally sensitive areas. Several of these companies were later charged with pollution related offenses in view of information uncovered during the investigation. Hawkeye disappeared in 1987 and has not been seen since then.

News of the embezzlement has been kept from the public to avoid panic. All of the aforesaid companies were heavily subsidized with government money.

While being held prisoner in the camp, I was able to implant several eavesdropping transmitters for later use.

In captivity, I was befriended by another prisoner, Miss Analees Von Cleef. I believe that she is the nurse that I was told to look out for. With her help, I was able to escape.

She deserves our highest commendation for services rendered. A further and more detailed-report will follow later.

Jean, out.

Hank O'Mally smiled at what was scrawled at the bottom of the memo. The note was in Jean's handwriting:

"See, Hank. Us mounties always get our man, and woman, too."

O'Malley looked across the command room. There was Jean, chatting up that new woman of his. She looked quite sexy in the dark green jumpsuit and the white GOGO boots. She was tall and tanned and platinum blonde. Her black leather jacket made her look just a bit on the wild side. Probably some biker chic.

Hank shook his head and returned to his computer. There was a mission to run now. And he had to set things up for it.

Across the room, Jean had his arm around Analees' shoulder as he showed her his treasure:

"This little baby is an Uzi, the gun the Israelis use. It is easy to conceal, and it can spray-paint a

room pretty good. “

She smiled demurely, and stroked her hair. She was glad for a shower, and a chance to rinse out her hair. She liked it better in its natural state.

He handed the Uzi to her and let her play with it. Slowly, she began to caress the barrel of the gun.

He reached for another weapon: “This here is a Sten gun. Lovely snout, eh?” She put down the first gun and began to play with the sten gun.

Jean stood back and stretched, leisurely cracking his knuckles: “The really neat thing is this: each one of these three little beauties was taken in raids on different biker gangs. We sort of, well, kept back a little ordinance for our private collections. You know, just like a policeman at a B&E pocketing a little something for the kids at home. Free Enterprise, eh? The real beauty is that these guns can’t be traced to any government, even our own.” He chuckled and winked at her. “Catch on?”

“I hope the safety catch is on those.”

“Sure. See, this is how it works. Neat, eh?”

“Yeah. Neat.”

Aside from Hank and Jean, there were three other men in the command room. One of them joked that they were “the five fingers of Death’s cool hand”. Armed with a battery of computers, “the five fingers” could do quite a lot of damage.

Before them spread about a thousand TV monitors, or so it seemed. Each had an image coming in from a different camera somewhere on a plane. Monitors were turned off most of the time. A couple of screens were on, showing an empty dawn sky, gold like autumn leaves. During the coming battle, all would light up. The display wall was called the insect’s eye, because an insect’s eye has a thousand different lenses. Analees wondered if God saw that way, with all the different things She has to look at.

There were just as many broadcasting units. The small bugs that Jean had attached to the walls in the village would enable those in the command room to hear what was being said in the village.

The police action was well-planned. Jean laughed as he told her: “We’re going to do it the J. Edgar Hoover way. We’ll wait until the shooting is done. Then we’ll go in and look things over. If there is anything left alive, then these...” He patted the table with the guns on it. “These will come in handy.”

Somehow, Jean seemed to have attached himself to her. He thought she had saved his life. She let him think so. She had backed him up when he gave his report. That report was not exactly truthful.

When they got alone after he had dictated his report in her presence, he had kissed her cheek. He had whispered:

“You know, Breathless, there is nothing in this world as beautiful as a woman who will lie for you.”

“It sure beats lying with you. “

She just could not resist giving him that shot. He seemed to be turned on by that sort of verbal abuse. Maybe she had finally found herself a good masochist after all.

“Gee,” she thought. “I’ll make it as a spy yet.”

Her uniform, and especially her GoGo boots, were a big hit here. She got lots of comments about Mrs. Peel and the Avengers.

“Hey, you know, I’m even dressed for action. Cool.” She had said. “And it looks like I’ve got a boyfriend that drinks like John Steed.” She had squeezed his hand, teasingly, and winked at him.

The screens now lit up. Land passed far below a dozen Hind helicopters. They also

caught each other on film.

Analees thought how the airplanes seemed to dance around in the air like so many guppies in a fish tank.

One or two of the screens picked up the silver longhouses of the village. The squadron were coming in on their targets.

Suddenly, one of the aircraft blew up. The explosion filled one of the screens. Then another screen went blank. The camera on the doomed aircraft would no longer send any pictures. There was silence. Several screens now showed smoke drifting peacefully across the sky.

“Jesus: “A nameless voice exclaimed. “They got rockets!

Hank O’Malley bellowed: “Get those helicopters out of there!”

He jabbed madly at some buttons on the control panel in front of him.

“Get some fast movers in there!”He screamed. “Shit, we don’t have fast movers! Who would have known they’d have rockets.”

Analees smiled in silence. It seems our Mrs. Peel had forgot to them what she had learned about the village’s defenses.

“Pity.”She thought. “The clouds on that monitor do look so pretty where those airplanes used to be.”

Hank was barking orders into a telephone: “And get that special Hercules up there. Fast.

Hank had a surprise of his own...but that would come later.

Screens showed the helicopters heading back at a much higher altitude. The longhouses looked much smaller now. The air armada fired its rockets from a distance.

Several hits were scored. Explosions burst from the ground like little yellow flowers opening to the sun.

Sounds from inside the village were now being picked up. Someone, wounded, screamed. Another “mike”picked up a woman’s voice: “Oh, my God! They’ve hit the baby! “

A voice from nowhere began a rhythmic death chant. There was a loud explosion.

One of the screens picked up the explosion as one of the helicopters blew up. Another screen, no longer “fed”by the gun camera of the exploded plane, went blank.

A voice from the village yelled: “Hi-Yee, Ho! Got the bastard!”

Handsome Lake’s voice cried out: “No! No! My people! There must be no more killing!”

Another voice said: “Stop firing!”

Handsome Lake said:

“Execute plan ‘B’! And send THE WORD out over the Internet, that others may hear our story. They can’t stop THE WORD from getting out!”

Then, in the midst of all the chaos, someone in the village began to sing a Christian hymn:

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Other voices joined in.

One of the screens now showed a gigantic aircraft, a Hercules transport. It was big and black and it had a red cross on the side of it. It looked somehow different, as if the aircraft had been modified from the original design. Other screens picked up different views of it. It came on like a black dragon, like death itself, following behind the plague of helicopter locusts. It came, slowly, silently.

It came majestically.

Hank’s voice was quiet, but firm: “Now we’ll use the ‘Big Boy’.

We'll give 'em a nice big Halloween candy! That'll teach 'em to mess with old Hank."

Now the Hercules was over the village. Slowly, a huge bomb bay opened in the bowels of the airplane. A big black bomb now fell from it. The giant aircraft was lifted by the sudden loss of weight. A parachute opened above the bomb. Slowly it fell, drifting nearer, nearer to the village.

Everything seemed to move in slow motion.

There was a loud explosion picked up on all microphones at once. The various screens displayed a visual record of a giant dust cloud rising slowly, as if it were the embodiment of the spirits of the entire village

The cloud seemed to take the shape of a great horned beast.. .a buffalo?

All was silent for a moment.

Then the headquarters of the special I.N.F. task force burst out with a cheer. Suddenly, people were all over each other, hugging and congratulating one another.

Analees felt sick inside. It felt like a cold November drizzle in her chest. She saw the UZI on the table in front of her. She picked it up, unlatched the safety catch, aimed and fired.

"Gut shoot!"She told herself. "They won't be wearing body armor in here."

The other figures in the room jumped and flailed at the air as they were hit, in a macabre dance of death. Then, they fell, like witches collapsing after an all-night sabbat.

"Hey, this is fun,"She screamed. She laughed wildly, free of all care.

Then she stopped. The rest of the room was now as still as a cemetery. Only then did she really understand what she had just done. She saw Jean's eyes, blank with nothingness, his face, frozen. He lay contorted on the floor, like a puppet with its strings cut. His eyes were like the glass eyes of a doll.

"Good-by, my love. This is so much nicer than any divorce, isn't it? This time, they will take pictures of you. Well..."She prodded his side with her boot. "I don't hear you disagreeing with me. Looks like I won our last argument."

She reloaded the Uzi, and sprayed the room again. Somewhere, an alarm was sounding now.

She kicked her GoGo boots off. Then she stripped naked as she said: "Your Alarms went off too late. Maybe we were all too late."

She used the magic of the forest to disappear like a shadow in the darkness.

The door burst open. The first guard entered, his machine gun ready for use. He found a mysterious room filled with dead or dying bodies. He looked around menacingly, but he could find no enemy to shoot at.

Chapter Twenty Six: "Going Home"

Naked and invisible, Analees left the building. She took care to step to the side and avoid physical contact with soldiers who were charging, guns ready to use, towards what was left of their tactical headquarters. No one had expected an attack to come from within their command post.

As the men passed her by, Analees began to notice that it was cool outside. As one song they used to sing in the village put it, "We're on the Eve of November".

Mother Mary Joy had taught them about the inner fires of Tibet. Those fires enable the Hidden Masters of Tibet to walk long distances in the icy cold of the Himalayas. Analees set about kindling such a fire within herself.

First, she found some trees where she could be by herself, without being rudely interrupted by charging soldiers. Then she began to breathe deeply. She turned her thoughts inward. Her mind turned her belly into an iron furnace pot. Flames rose from her tan tien, a mystic spot located about three fingers below her belly button. Heat spread all through her body. She could feel it coursing through the arteries in her arms and legs, 'til even her fingers and toes were warm.

Now she would have to use the street survival skills she had been taught in the village - and her invisibility - to get back to her old home. At this point in time, she had nowhere else to go. Larry Longboat had said that the place was still being used as a "safe house" by members of the movement.

She figured that her first step must be to get down south to Toronto. She lucked out. She followed two stretcher bearers to a big black two engined helicopter that had a red cross on it. She overheard someone saying that it was taking wounded south to a hospital in Toronto. So she snuck on board and hitched a ride. She hid herself in the back corner of the main hold of the Aircraft.

She recognized one of the men on a stretcher. He was being given blood and oxygen. Hank O'Malley was barely clinging to life. Somehow, she no longer felt any anger towards him. Her main feeling was a burning desire to get out of this whole scene. And a fierce determination to do so.

As she thought about Jean - a man who had raped her, and whom she had killed - she could not help but feel that being invisible was sometimes better than being a beauty queen. And it was often quite a lot safer.

She saw the wounded men lain out on stretchers in front of her. She saw the army nurses tending to them. She wondered what the life of an army nurse might have been like.

As the helicopter lifted off, she looked out of a window. The ground below became a patchwork quilt. Then everything went silver. At last, they were riding above a sea of clouds, white waves that were lit bright, bright white by the sun. For a moment, Analees wondered if this was what it was like going to Heaven. Maybe she had died, and was on her way there.

Something inside her told her that it was not yet time, that she still had work to do on earth.

She continued to concentrate on remaining invisible. In this dark half - world she now occupied, this borderland between dimensions, she could still see the "real" world, the world of mankind, quite clearly. When she closed her "this world" eyes, the third eye, located over the bridge of her nose and invisible to the eyes of ordinary men, took over. This enabled her to see the shadowy images of another world. They appeared to her surrounded by a thick gray fog. She had been told that this was a "cat's eye" view, since cats can see another dimension.

She closed her "this world" eyes. She saw what looked like three dark demonic figures in black robes dragging Jean away with them. He didn't seem to want to go. He struggled as they pulled him along. They took him anyway. It filled her with fear, for she had been told that there

were dark unpleasant places that people sometimes go to when they die. It was as if she could smell hell.

She opened her “mankind world” eyes briefly, and saw again the bright white clouds. After a moment, she closed her outer world eyes once more. Jean was gone to wherever they were taking him.

The trip to Toronto would take at least an hour. She might as well see what she could of this other world. She had nothing else to do.

Something was coming to her through the mists. It was a tall slim figure on horseback. No. Wait a minute. This was a familiar form.

“Yes. Yes. Yes.”

It was Terri Tall Corn riding on the back of the King of Stags, just as she said she would.

“Sister, I have come from the Land of the Dead to speak with you. I still love you. I always will. And I will be with you in the World of Your Dreams. You were like a mother to me, now I will be your mother. Just like it is on earth when mothers become old and their children care for them.”

“Why have you come now?” Analees was startled to learn that she could communicate telepathically here.

“To help you get back home. First get some clothes so that you can become visible. Then scam a John to get some money. I will use my mental hunting skill to find the right John for you, just as I lured the King of Stags here to his death. I will enter his mind and make him dream of you. I will take the picture of you that I’ve painted in my mind and place it in his brain. But then you will have to do the rest. Just as you were taught in street skills school.”

A noise in the helicopter startled Analees and she opened her eyes. One of the injured men was pointing to her and saying that he had just seen the Angel of Death. She renewed her mental effort at staying invisible. She must not slip up like that again. She moved gingerly to another part of the aircraft.

By the time she opened her “Third Eye” once more, the King of Stags and his graceful rider were nowhere to be found.

She turned her attention back to the world of mankind.

The helicopter landed on a large heliport and the wounded were off loaded.

Analees got out of the plane and carefully made her way into the hospital by following a stretcher in. With a little luck, she might find some clothing in that hospital.

For some time, she stood, still naked and invisible, near a nursing station, watching the nurses come and go. Lights at that nursing station flashed like those on the control room of tactical headquarters for a battle group. Well, they were also fighting a war here, one where death must always win out, sooner or later.

Finally Analees heard one of them say she was going off duty. She followed that nurse down three dim hallways and two flights of stairs until she came to the nurses’ locker room. She slipped through the door with the nurse, then watched the woman change and leave.

Fortunately, several of the lockers did not have locks on them. Hospital Security was so good that many nurses obviously felt they did not need to bother locking their stuff up.

She was alone in the nurses’ dressing room. Suddenly, with a “POP”, she became visible. Quickly, she looked through the lockers. Her heart was pounding. But she figured she would bluff any one who came in by saying she’d just been in the showers. Finally, she managed to find an outfit that would fit her, well, sort of. She dressed as fast as she could.

Analees wound up wearing a black minidress, a black leather jacket, and dark green rubber boots. Everything was about one size too big, but it would do. Her outfit was just a little bit kinky looking, good clothes to wear when hunting for a “John” to scam.

The only catch was that she didn’t have any underwear on. The woman whose locker

she'd emptied had obviously kept wearing the same undies while on duty. How inconsiderate. But then she remembered that Marilyn Monroe didn't wear undies either.

"Well, I always wanted to be just like Marilyn." She shrugged and smiled to herself, as she walked out the door. Sun tanned and slimmed down from swimming all summer, she was a stunning platinum blonde herself.

The black purse that she took had only about five dollars in it. But it also had subway tokens. She walked calmly through the halls, noticing that it was now visitor's hours. She calmly took the visitors' elevator to the main floor and left the building by the front door. She stopped at that door to ask a security guard for directions to the nearest subway. Then she just sort of disappeared into the bowels of the earth beneath Toronto.

As she hurried down the stairs leading to the subway, she saw that it was a clear day, and that it looked to be early afternoon. It was amazing how much had already happened on this day.

Soon, she stood waiting for the subway train to come. These tunnels were drafty. She remembered Marilyn Monroe's famous sidewalk scene in "The Seven Year Itch", where Marilyn stood on a grate over a New York subway. Suddenly, her dress was blown up by a breeze from a train passing beneath her.

Just thinking of that, Analees' crotch itched, so she looked around to see that no one was watching her, and discretely scratched herself. Back in the village, she would not have had to be discreet. No one would care. If you itched, you scratched yourself.

"And people call this civilization?" She thought. "Where you can't even scratch an itch?" She realized that her way of thinking had changed over the summer.

A train stopped and she got on it. She found an empty seat, and took it. Across from her was an add for pantyhose, showing a model who looked very pleased with herself, wearing nice black silk on her legs. She always felt it was nice to wear silk.

Analees thought: "Even if Marilyn Monroe didn't wear underwear, going without either undies or pantyhose is for the birds." Her toes went "squish, squish" in her large rubber fashion boots, as if to nod their approval.

Now she smiled wickedly as she thought of how one of the nurses back at the hospital would get a nasty surprise when her shift ended and she went to change.

She thought to the nurse: "Well, baby, don't worry. Your clothes will be put to good use."

She took the Bloor street subway until it got to Yonge Street. By all that she'd been told, a girl could still scam an honest dollar here. As she began to walk slowly along Yonge Street, she began to enjoy the sights of the Head Shops and whatnot that had painted Toronto the Blue over with the psychedelic colors of a New Age.

"Cool, man." She thought, feeling years younger.

As she walked along, she noticed many "Two Spirit" types, who seemed to be quite happy. Many were holding hands as they walked. There were Halloween decorations everywhere. She thought of how this was "the Gay Christmas", the one day of the year when they could safely go about in drag. In the New Huronia, the people had followed the First Nations way of honoring the "Two Spirits" for having a different vision of things. In the world of the white worms, those with different visions were to be feared and burnt like witches.

Outside the door of a Head Shop called the Half Moon, a dummy of a patch eyed pirate hung from dark wood yard arm, a noose around its neck. It was a silent reminder of the fate of rebels in the past.

Suddenly, a bar caught her eye. Electric blue and purple lights were flashing inside. Somehow, she felt drawn to it. Inside her head, she heard Terri's voice saying softly: "He's there, waiting for you. Your own special 'King of Stags.' He's already got you in his mind. I have been there, and I have put you there. You are now his dream girl."

She walked over to the bar and went in. She saw a man in a navy blue business suit sitting

alone at the bar. He wore shiny black shoes and the dress code of the wealthy. In their street survival courses, back at New Huronia, they had been taught about the dress codes of the rich and the wannabe rich. It usually meant they would be a good target, because “they’d have some bucks.”

This man had a full head of gray hair, black beetle eyebrows, and a shiny round face like a full moon. Somehow, he looked familiar, but she couldn’t quite place him. His eyes caught hers.

She walked over to him.

“Can I buy you a drink?” He asked her.

“Sure.” She replied. “I’ll have a rye and diet coke.”

He ordered for her, and got another beer for himself. She sat down beside him.

“You’re not a policeman, are you?” She asked sweetly.

Analees had been taught that hookers usually ask that question in the mistaken belief that if an undercover policeman lies, it will give rise to a defense of “entrapment”. That is not the law, but asking the question makes you sound more like a “real” girl.

“No. I’m not a cop.”

He smiled from ear to ear. He had obviously been in this sort of scene before. Now the conversation got to the point, fast.

“How much for all night, ‘round the world?” He asked.

“Four hundred dollars.” She replied. She didn’t want to scare him off by sounding too expensive. Right now, she really need the business.

“OK, baby. It’s a deal!” He said. The waitress brought her drink. As her escort paid for it, she downed it quickly. She could feel her heart going just a little faster. This scamming was kind of scary stuff if you aren’t used to it. And Analees had never done this before.

“I’ve already got us a hotel room.” He said.

As soon as he finished his beer, they quietly slipped away from the bar.

He led her to a run down hotel. He got his key and took her to his room.

Nobody seemed to pay any attention to them. In this hotel, it was almost as if they were invisible.

The room was small. It had the usual table, dresser, and TV set. The bed was covered with a dark green blanket. The carpeting was dark brown. There was a case of beer on the dresser, bright blue in color.

He sat down on the bed. She smiled at him and began to help him undress.

“You come from out of town?” She said sweetly as she smiled and licked her lips seductively. She dropped one of his shoes to the floor and slowly peeled a sock off. “You look tired, babykins.”

“All the way from North Bay, the Golf capital of Canada.” He answered. “I’m down here on business for the week. Just got in two hours ago. It’s a long drive.”

The other shoe dropped with a thud. She began to peel his other sock off.

“Let me draw you a nice warm bath before we got to it. We’ve got all night, after all. I’ll change and come in and wash you.”

“Great.” He said, as he stood up in his underwear. He went across the room and got himself a beer. He had a silly smile on his face as he leered at her.

She went into the bathroom and ran a nice hot tub for him. Now naked, he followed her into the room and she helped him get into the bath. He lay back and relaxed.

“Ahhh.” Was all he said.

“Be with you in a moment” she said as she left the room. She smiled at him and winked.

Now she had to really rush. She got his wallet out of his pants and quickly counted out a thousand dollars in cash, plus assorted credit cards.

“Well” she thought. “I don’t really need those credit cards. So I’ll leave him his bank card to help him to get home.”

She also left him \$100, just for being co-operative. It was sort of a tip. “Now I’ve been a real Boy Scout, doing my good deed for the day. And the money I’m taking will still get me home in style. No need to be greedy.”

She hid his pants in the closet, just to slow him down a bit when he came out of the bath and found her missing. Then she grabbed her purse and stuffed the money into it, and slipped away quickly, closing the door behind her.

She left the hotel to see the late afternoon shadows starting to lengthen along the street. She rushed down to the nearest subway station.

As she waited for the subway, she stood above a grill. A breeze blew up between her legs, causing her to shiver. Modestly, she held her miniskirt in place.

Her heart was beating kind of fast. She took three deep breaths to calm herself down. She could just imagine an angry John out looking for her. Would that train never come?

After minutes seemed like hours, it did. She got on, and rode to Union Station. There she felt a bit of relief as she quickly disappeared into a crowd.

She walked up to a wicket. She bought a ticket for home. Impulsively, she asked if she could still get on the club car and found out that she could. The train was leaving in twenty minutes.

“That’s fine.” She said, and bought a club car ticket.

She thought to herself: “Scamming the Johns is hard work. I’ve got a treat coming.”

She felt the tension ease out of her as she walked over to a small gift shop in the station and bought a pair of black pantyhose. She also got an orange necklace and some orange clip on earrings that looked like tiny Jack-o-Lanterns.

“I might as well get into the season.” She said, and smiled to herself. “After all, I am the Great Pumpkin!”

She went into the ladies room to put the pantyhose on.

She was relieved to get to a stall in more ways than one.

Once she had put her new pantyhose on, she rubbed the silk next to her skin and sighed. Then she put her boots back on, and flushed the toilet.

As she left, she saw a fat old bag lady in the washroom there, naked except for an old pair of black socks and beat up brown shoes. The woman’s dirty old clothes lay in a pile on the floor beside her. She was bathing herself, using the sink. The sight was a grim reminder of the downside of Toronto’s Tory Utopia.

Analees now rushed to find the private waiting room for her train. Club car patrons don’t have to line up with the common folk. There it was. Frosted windows, too, so that they had more privacy.

She showed her ticket at the door and entered. She got a miniature bottle of diet Pepsi at the back of the room and opened it. The sweet Pop tasted good, so she downed it, and got another.

She sat down and picked up a copy of the Globe and Mail. It had a nice picture of an Olympic diver poised to jump, wearing a black one piece bathing suit. It was a high cut suit, so you could see that she was clean shaven. The girl looked pretty good, but Analees felt that she’d look just as good after her summer in the sun.

These days, the Globe was certainly improving. Maybe she should write to them and inquire if they’d like her to be a “Globe Girl” for their center fold. It wouldn’t hurt to ask.

Analees really did find herself looking forward to the club car. She figured she really deserved a little luxury after what she had been through this day. And besides, she was just famished.

Finally, the announcement came over the PA system and she pre-boarded the train. She

walked down a row of immaculate white seats and black tables and found herself a seat by the south window of the train. West bound, she would get a nice view of Lake Ontario at sunset.

There were special Halloween Napkins by the table setting. Each serviette had a witch in a black dress wearing a pointed hat and riding a broom over the horns of a crescent moon.

“Nice touch.” She thought.

Slowly, majestically, the train pulled out of the station, as it had so many times before. Soon, it carried her out into the golden light.

She looked out of the window. The waters of Lake Ontario were starting to turn from blue to mauve as the sun began to set. This time of year, the sun seemed to set so much earlier, a grim reminder that winter was coming.

This day had been one of the fault lines of her life, just like her first visit Larry Longboat’s cottage was. Things would never be the same again.

The waiter in the crisply clean CN uniform came and gave her a nice glass of dark red wine and later served her Beef Tournedos in a rich wine sauce with broccoli. The wine sauce just melted in her mouth.

Her mind raced over the events of the day, and she thought: “Well, Handsome Lake would forgive me for a little self indulgence if her knew what I have just been through. I sort of think that “scamming the Johns” is just a bit too nerve wracking for me.”

The trip back home went smoothly.

As the train pulled into the little station that was her destination, she saw the empty platform, lit yellow in the growing darkness. She remembered her long dead parents waiting there for her, when she was so much younger. Tears came to her eyes. It was all so long ago. The world had been filled with hope back then.

She got off the train and took a cab for her old home.

Kids were out doing the trick or treat thing. She saw a father with two little ghosts in white sheets. Then they came to a stop sign, and another group crossed in front of them. There was a mother with her children, two Indians in tan buckskin, and a tall thin girl dressed as a red devil and carrying a pitch fork. The cab drove on. Analees wondered what would become of those children in the polluted world to come.

“Yes, it is still there.” She thought as they drove up to her house. Black tree branches stretched out from dark tree trunks, looking like the knurled fingers of a very old woman reaching up from under the ground. It gave the place a witchy look.

She paid the fare, and then watched the red tail lights of the cab as it drove away.

She could remember times when she had arrived home with her parents in the family Volkswagen, to be greeted by a barking dog. Now, everything was silent. The night wind felt cold this evening, like Death’s breath. She shivered.

Her spare key was still where she had hid it under the porch.

“Now, let’s hope Larry hasn’t changed the lock.”

He hadn’t.

She turned the key and opened the door. After her mother’s death, she had been left all alone in what had been the family home. She had felt like a thirty year old latch key kid. Tonight reminded her of that night, so long ago.

She entered the house. The old furniture was still pretty much as she had left it. Larry was not a very ambitious decorator. Somehow, she didn’t think he would be. He was better at hunting.

She smiled as she saw the big paintings still on the wall. Her mother had been quite an artist. There was her grim faced father, reading a book as he always was. He was young in that painting. It must have been done thirty years ago. Another painting showed her in a Royal Blue bathing suit, face beaming with victory, back in the days when she swam in competition.

Memories came flooding back to her as she looked at the paintings that transported her, however briefly, into the warm and comforting past. Over the years, those memories had faded but now they burst into new life in her mind, like Tulips in early spring.

She smiled to think of tulips, dear red, yellow, deepest purple flowers, harbingers of the summer soon to come. She loved tulips best of all the flowers in the world. They reminded her that the bulbs we plant in the fall will rise again next year. She saw that in time, the words of the New Handsome Lake would spread throughout the Internet. And maybe Terri, Terri Tall Corn, was right. She would be back again someday.

There was a loud knocking at the door. Heart pounding, Analees went over and opened it. The tall figure of Larry Longboat, dressed in dark green like a modern Robin Hood, filled the door frame.

“Larry!”

“Analees! My Love! You did get out alive!”

He kissed her on the lips, long and sloppy, the way she liked it. She felt her toes tingle.

In her mind, she thanked the Creator for this new and exciting life of hers. So much of her life in the time before had been wasted. Now, she would really live.

This time, it was the Head Nurse who had flown over the Cookoo’s nest.